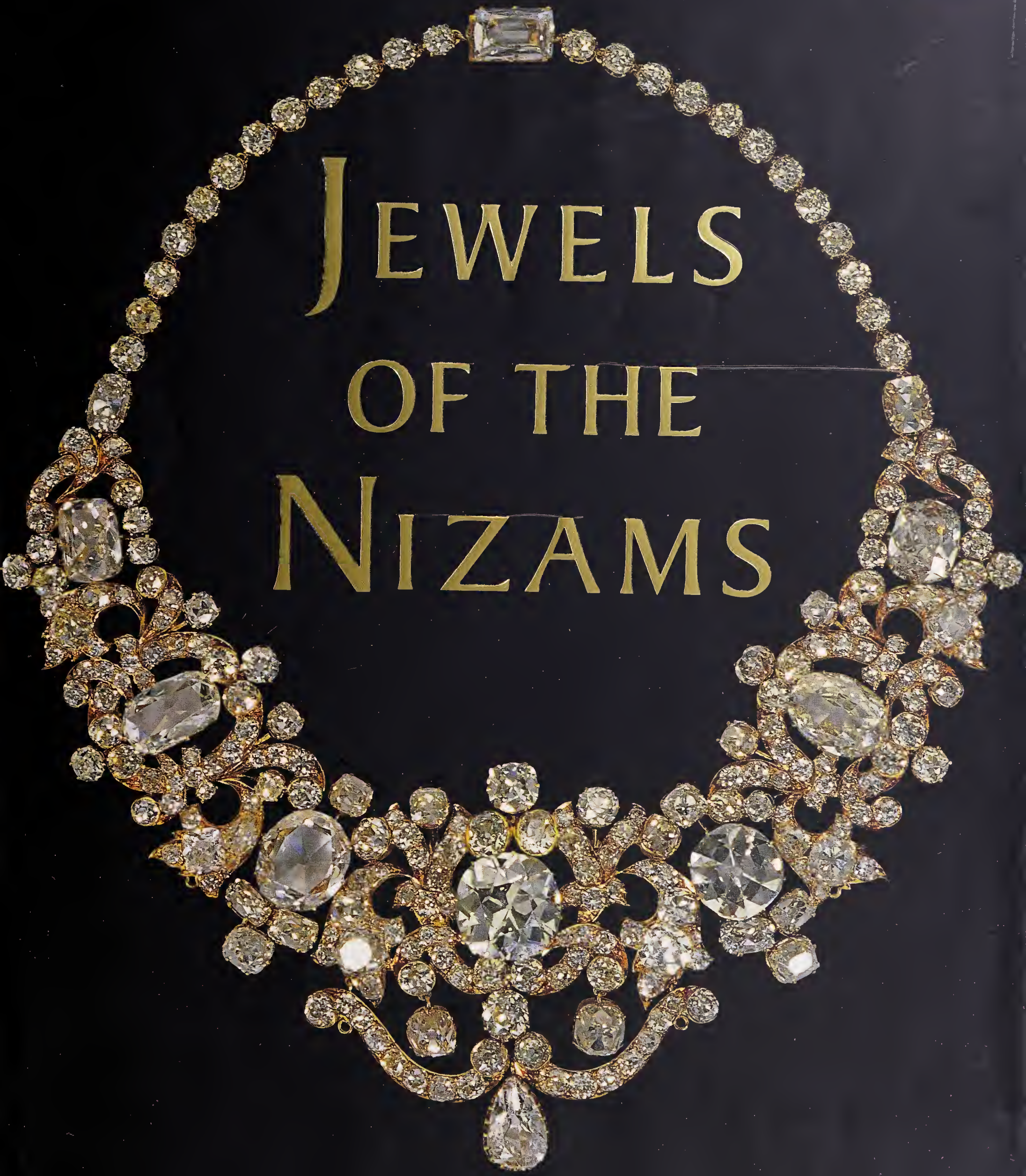
# Jewels of the Nizams



Usha R Bala Krishnan

photography Bharath Ramamrutham

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ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING collections of gemstones and jewellery was acquired by the Indian government in 1995. Sometimes worn but never shown, these jewels once belonged to the Nizams of Hyderabad, reputed to be the richest men in the world.

*Jewels of the Nizams* is the first ever study and documentation of this collection. Once part of the Nizams' state regalia and personal heritage, the ornaments date from the early 18th century to the early 20th century. Finely crafted from gold and silver and highlighted with exquisite enamelling, the jewels are set with Colombian emeralds, diamonds from the Golconda mines, Burmese rubies and spinels, and pearls from Basra and India.

Though only a fraction of the legendary wealth of the Asaf Jah dynasty, the collection is breathtaking when translated into gem weights. There are over 25,000 diamonds weighing in excess of 12,000 carats, more than 2,000 emeralds weighing over 10,000 carats, and pearls exceeding 40,000 *chows*.

*Jewels of the Nizams* documents this unique collection of jewels that give credence to legends, apocryphal tales and fading memories of a fabulously wealthy dynasty that ruled the Deccan for seven generations.

FRONT COVER: *Kanthi Almas Kanval* (NJ 95.106)
BACK COVER: *Brooch Almas Chantara Numa Kanval* (NJ 95.5)

# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the valuable contribution of Mr Narendra Luther. His insightful essay on the history of the Asaf Jah dynasty provides a pivotal backdrop to the story of this collection. The essay traces the origins of the dynasty and chronicles the reign of the Asaf Jah Nizams in the Deccan through seven generations, until Hyderabad state was integrated with the Union of India after independence.

Born in 1933, Narendra Luther spent his early years in Lahore and migrated to India after its Partition. He joined the Indian Administrative Service in 1955, but kept up his hobby of writing throughout his official career. He is a well-known writer and humorist and has for a long time headed Zinda Dilan, a renowned society of humorists. In 1985, he organised the first and highly successful World Humour Conference.

Narendra Luther was the sole administrator of Hyderabad for three years, from 1974 to 1977, and retired as Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh. He was appointed the executive head of the committee for the quartercentenary celebrations of Hyderabad in 1991.

He is a prolific writer and has a number of books in English, Urdu and Oriya to his credit. He has authored *Hyderabad: Memoirs of a City* as well as *Prince, Poet, Lover, Builder*, a biography of Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, the founder of Hyderabad. His published work also includes *Wit and Wisdom* in English and *Band Kiwar* and *Hawai Columbus* in Urdu.

Narendra Luther lives in Hyderabad where he divides his time between writing and management consultancy.

# JEWELS OF THE NIZAMS

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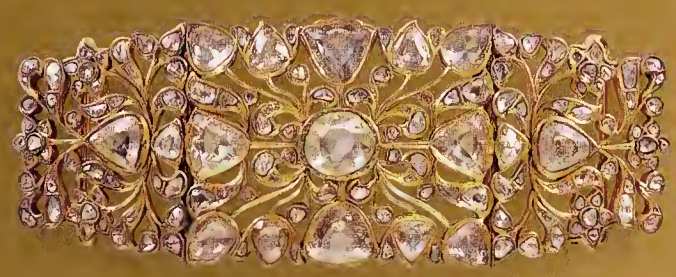

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Mahboob Ali Khan, the [illegible]th Nizam of Hyderabad, stands amidst a glittering assembly of Indian princes during the Delhi Durbar, 1903. Simply attired in a long black coat, he presents a striking contrast to his bejewelled fellow rulers.

# INTRODUCTION

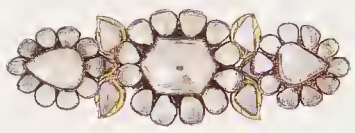
In the public mind, the Nizam of Hyderabad is inextricably linked with the image of astronomical wealth and fabulous jewels. Indeed, the Nizam's jewellery collection is one of the most valuable in the world, although its precise worth and real extent has always been unknown. And so in 1972, the news that the collection was being offered for sale to the Government of India caused a sensation in the world of jewellery. But negotiations between the government and the trustees dragged on for years, threatening repeatedly to break down and throw open the offer to all bidders.

This possibility aroused universal excitement and a wide range of reactions. At one end of the scale were the strident voices of patriotism passionately urging that the jewels remain in India. At the other end was a world of international collectors intensely excited by the prospect of acquiring part of India's romantic and exotic past. Somewhere in between, were those silent masters of shadow-boxing – patriotic on the surface but calculating the vast profits that could be made from orchestrating a sale of this magnitude. Former royals watched silently and apprehensively. There was a spurt of private sales, as many hastily disposed of important and valuable items in the fear that their treasuries might be targeted next. It would be 23 long years before the curtain came down on a saga that was avidly followed within the country and in international jewellery circles. The unfolding drama of the Nizam's jewels would entail court cases, tantrums, intrigue, conflicting decisions and colossal expenses.

The jewels represented many things to many people. The heirs and beneficiaries of the Nizam's jewellery trusts were only concerned with obtaining the best possible price. For them, the money they would receive was a chance to pay off their debts and start life afresh. To the Government of India, the jewels constituted a national heritage – especially since so many historical jewels had all vanished. No other ruler had constituted a jewellery trust, and this was a chance to acquire some – albeit an infinitesimally minute fraction – of India's legendary riches. To the tax department, it was an opportunity to recover the large outstanding dues from the Nizam's trusts. To jewellers and gem dealers, the interest was purely gemmological. The quantity and quality of gems that would become available was like manna from heaven. Writing in the 1950s, D F Karaka, Nizam VII, Mir Osman Ali Khan's unofficial biographer, had said that the gems were priceless and "if they were put on the market all at once, they would wreck it."[1] To scholars, monetary values were purely academic. The opportunity to study a group of jewels that dated to the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, and that belonged to the wealthiest and foremost native prince of India, was unprecedented.

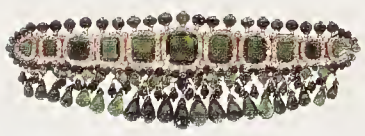
Examples of really old jewellery in India are rare since from one generation to the other stones and precious metals were re-cycled into new ornaments. Very few pieces have been found in archaeological excavations and those with a watertight provenance are rarer still. Most jewels have had a highly chequered history. They constituted the portable treasury of the state and served as cash to buy loyalty, recruit troops, bribe the enemy or reward allegiance. Moreover, the ease with which gemstones could be carried made them the prime target of invaders on looting expeditions.

*The Imperial (Jacob) Diamond*
NJ 95.89

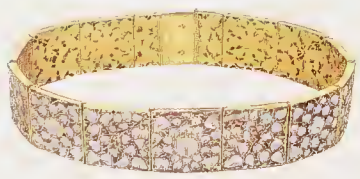


*Bazuband Almas Parab*
NJ 95.83/1-2

*Kanthi Marvareed Kanval Almas Mai Padak* NJ 95.67



*Chintak Zamarrud*
NJ 95.90



*Kamar Patta Jaravi Barai Sari* NJ 95.105

Thus jewellery has always served several purposes in the Indian socio-cultural milieu – beyond mere adornment. To women, with whom jewels are most commonly associated, they constituted personal wealth and security. They were also emblems of social status and prestige. To kings and nobles, jewels reiterated the material power and might of their realm; and in the sphere of the metaphysical, the prophylactic and apotropaic powers of gems were essential to ward off the omnipresent evil eye. To gods and goddesses, men, women and children, royal, urban or rural, rich or poor, jewels were much coveted possessions.

Displays of enormous wealth in the form of ornaments have always been credible affirmations of sovereignty to the emperors and maharajas of India. Right up to the late 19th and early 20th century, such displays were still relevant. A monarch's status was proclaimed to all by his gem-encrusted throne, the glittering stones set in his turban ornaments and the jewels that adorned his neck, arms, waist and weapons. But royal jewels have always been shrouded in mystery – hidden away in treasuries, guarded by eunuchs and soldiers, and sometimes inaccessible even to the ruler. Over the centuries, innumerable travellers and chroniclers have recorded and even fabricated legends and myths about the mines, gem bazaars and wealth of the Indian royals.

The Nizams, maharajas and nawabs of India belong to the realm of history; but glimpses of their past, their lifestyles and traditions are manifest in a few remaining majestic palaces, the costly objects that they surrounded themselves with and, most of all, in their jewels. The jewels of a monarch evoke memories of wealth, authority, sovereignty, relations with foreign powers, prevailing tastes and fashions, the vicissitudes of life and the shifting fortunes of dynasties. They are the last enduring symbols of the glory of a bygone era – of royal ateliers, patronage of the arts, enduring craftsmanship skills and a flourishing international trade. The diamond-studded belt (NJ 95.105) recalls the legendary Golconda mines – mines that once yielded the largest and finest diamonds in the world. The Jacob diamond (NJ 95.89) is a vivid reminder of the machinations of the gem trade. The exquisitely enamelled armbands (NJ 95.83/1-2) recreate the luxuriant foliage of the Islamic paradise garden.

The formation of the Nizam's jewellery trusts in 1951 and 1952 marks the culmination of one stage in the story of the jewels. After incorporation of the trusts, the jewels were locked in the vaults of the Mercantile Bank (now the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank) in Bombay. In the almost three decades since 1972, (when they were first offered to the Government of India) there have been innumerable tantalizing references to the jewels of the Nizams of Hyderabad, believed to be one of the finest and most valuable collections of Indian jewellery in the world. It was only in 1995, when the sale was completed in a photo-finish finale and the jewels shifted to the security of the Reserve Bank of India in Bombay, that the saga of the Nizam's jewels drew to a conclusion. In commemoration of the

occasion, a media photographer was permitted to take a few quick pictures of select items.[2]

This then is the story of the incalculable wealth of the Asaf Jah dynasty. Wealth that has lain concealed in the darkness of a bank vault for over 50 years. It is the study and documentation of gemstones and jewels that few people have had the opportunity to ever see and handle. The purpose of the post-sale documentation was twofold: first, to prepare a comprehensive record of the jewels; and second, to place them in an art-historical context by attempting to establish their provenance and studying their design and workmanship. Ideally, such a study, the first of its kind, would require an extended period of time; but security considerations precluded this luxury.

A brisk pace had to be established to complete the examination and study in the time allocated – a mere 4-5 days – and to photograph the pieces for publication and further study. Accurate photographic recording was very important and therefore had to be accorded the maximum time, since henceforth the photographs alone might have to suffice for future scholars.

Mir Osman Ali Khan poses for a formal portrait soon after his accession as the seventh Nizam in 1911, wearing a turban ornament similar to the *Sarpech Murassa* NJ 95.109.

Each item had to be removed from its case or packet, recorded and verified against an earlier inventory that had been prepared by the government when the jewels were first valued. The detailed task of counting the gemstones in each piece was the next step. Then, the jewel was measured and weighed, and its condition noted. Precious time was then spent in examining the style and workmanship to ascertain provenance and antiquity. The piece was arranged to bring out the quality of its stones and the workmanship, and then photographed against a specially prepared backdrop. Thereafter, it was once again verified against the inventory, recorded and returned to its case. The Government of India inventory, prepared when the jewels were valued and eventually purchased, lists 173 items. However, the actual number of pieces (accounting for pairs of armbands, sets of buttons, groups of turban ornaments and rings) is 325, not including the Jacob diamond and the 22 unset emeralds. All these items, many of them front and back, were documented in just four days. The task was demanding, to say the least, and the time woefully short. The responsibility to fellow historians involved in the complex task of accurately dating Indian jewellery was an onerous one.

There were several occasions when the brisk pace faltered. When the Jacob diamond emerged, an entire one-and-a-half hours simply went by magically – as stunned and mesmerized the 184.50 carat gem was reverently handled. This was an occasion that was not likely to come again. The diamond was measured, weighed and minutely examined. Its size, lustre and brilliance rendered

every one in the room speechless. The magnificent diamond belt (NJ 95.33) similarly halted proceedings. Besides the sheer breathtaking beauty of the ornament, the stones had to be counted over and over again to accurately record their number. The majestic turban ornaments, the pearl and diamond necklace (NJ 95.67), the awesome emerald necklace (NJ 95.90), all slowed down the momentum of work with their commanding presence.

In addition to the famous Imperial 'Jacob' diamond and 22 unset emeralds, the collection comprises turban ornaments, necklaces, earrings, armbands, bracelets, belts, buttons and cufflinks, anklets, watch chains and rings – all jewels once worn by the Nizams of Hyderabad, their wives, children and grandchildren. White, green and red – diamonds and pearls, emeralds, rubies and spinels set in gold and silver predominate.

Although the jewels of the Nizams were once a part of the treasury of the 'richest man in the world', they are shrouded in mystery and hardly any archival records are extant on individual items. No information is available on who made them, when and where they were made and, least of all, who they were made for. The trust deeds merely record the names of the jewels in Persian and Hindustani in the form of an inventory. These names have been retained to serve as a link. However, un-translated material in Persian and Urdu in the Hyderabad State Archives may provide fresh information to future researchers.

The jewels of India's emperors and maharajas have, throughout history, been virtually unknown outside the coterie of the court and the inner circle of their trusted family. While the crown jewels of European and Russian royalty have been documented, chronicled and studied by gemmologists and art historians, the jewels of India's princes have remained locked away in the treasury of their palaces, worn only on state occasions and seen only by privileged visitors.

The resplendent Hyderabad chariot, drawn by elephants, leads the parade of Indian princes at the 1911 Delhi Durbar.

Until recently, research in the area of Indian jewellery has focused primarily on the Mughal period. Western scholars divided the subject into Mughal – which included those areas in which the Mughal heritage endured after the collapse of the empire – and non-Mughal, which encompassed everything else (irrespective of period, region and technique of manufacture). However, in recent years scholars have established that a vibrant and rich jewellery tradition prevailed outside the ateliers of the Mughal court and consequently interests and perceptions have changed. The Nizam's collection of jewellery includes pieces that represent the most outstanding specimens of Deccani, Rajasthani and Lucknavi workmanship.

Efforts have also been made to depart from the temptation, or ignorance, of attributing all Mughal-style jewellery to the ateliers of Rajasthan. This study aims at better comprehending the subtleties in the craftsmanship of different regions and the manner in which various jewellery traditions broke free of the stereotypes of Rajasthan.

By setting up trusts to provide for every conceivable exigency, Mir Osman Ali Khan reiterated an intrinsically Indian way of doing things. If the treasury was historically a financial bulwark to the empire, the trusts were intended to serve as a fortification against the withering fortunes of the Asaf Jah dynasty. In the aftermath of Independence and the integration of about 600 princely states into the Indian Union, royal jewels did indeed serve their owners as a hidden source of wealth. Hence few royal Indian jewels have survived intact and fewer have an established provenance. Stories abound of the visits of jewellers and gem dealers to India immediately after Independence – on an acquiring spree. Many, including Cartier and Harry Winston, had in earlier times been privileged to make jewels for the maharajas and nawabs, re-cycling stones from old jewels – so they had a fair idea of the kind of priceless jewels that were in the possession of the royals. The first to fall prey to the new economic order were jewels set with large and important gems – whose intrinsic value lay in the gems themselves and not so much in the ornament of which they formed a part. Other jewels – gold-set and enamelled items – were put away for a rainy day. In recent years, these rainy days have been a frequent occurrence, judging by the number of superb quality Indian jewels that have made their appearance on the international market.

Mir Osman Ali Khan, Nizam VII, photographed in his coronation robes immediately after his accession in 1911.

In this context, these remaining Asaf Jah jewels are an enduring testimony to the legacy of the Nizams, the creative genius of designers, the technical skills of the craftsmen and the prosperity of the Deccan. They give credence to legends and apocryphal tales of a fabulously wealthy dynasty that ruled for seven generations. The significance of the jewels of the Nizams far transcends their history and their current monetary worth. They are truly a royal bequest!

# THE ASAF JAHS

Through the ages, the great Deccan plateau of peninsular India has witnessed the rise and fall of powerful dynasties. For almost two and a quarter centuries – from 1724 to 1948 – the history of the Deccan and the princely state of Hyderabad is the history of the Asaf Jahi dynasty.

Mir Qamaruddin, a general of Turkish descent, was the founder of the Asaf Jahi dynasty. He was a favourite of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, under whom he fought many campaigns and who gave him the title Chin Qilich Khan or 'boy-swordsman'. Courage and military prowess led to his meteoric rise in the court. In 1707, at the time of Aurangzeb's death, he was the viceroy (*subedar*) of Bijapur. In 1712, when Farrukh Siyar ascended the Mughal throne, he was awarded the title Nizam-ul-Mulk Fateh Jung or just Nizam for short and was appointed viceroy of the Deccan, the richest province in the Mughal empire. In 1724, he received the title Asaf Jah (the highest title bestowed on a subject of the Mughal emperor – Asaf was the wise Prime Minister of the Biblical King Solomon), by which the dynasty came to be known. He held the two powerful offices of the Prime Minister of the Mughal empire and the viceroy of the Deccan simultaneously. Far away from the seat of power in Delhi, Nizam-ul-Mulk controlled the ascendancy of the Marathas, the French, the Portuguese and the English.

The Asafiya flag bearing the inscription '*Al Azmat Lillah*' (All greatness to God).

The Nizam's chief opposition in the Deccan came from the Marathas, who imposed levies and collected land revenues from the area, depriving the Nizam of what he considered his rightful income. Rivalry with the Marathas extended to the north as well, and in an engagement between the two, the Nizam suffered a reverse. This led to the treaty of 1738, under which the Nizam ceded Malwa and the region between the rivers Narmada and Tapti to the Marathas. The historian James Grant Duff is of the view that the Nizam consolidated his position in the Deccan at the cost of the northern territories.[1]

In the Carnatic, the situation was more complicated. Here, in addition to the Marathas, the Nizam had to contend with the Nawab of Arcot, the ruler of Trichinopoly and the two fledgling European powers, the French and the English. It was only in 1742, when he proceeded to the Carnatic with a large army and defeated the Marathas, that he could establish his sway completely over the area. The first Nizam's rule extended over the entire plateau south of the river Tapti, with the exception of a narrow strip of land along the west coast, which the Marathas dominated. It extended down to Trichinopoly and Madurai, encompassing the legendary Golconda diamond mines and stretching along the east coast. The revenue from such a vast territory was colossal.

Mir Qamaruddin was known for his courage and wisdom and his life is the stuff of legends. It is said that once during a hunt, he lost his way in a jungle. Hungry, thirsty, and woebegone, Qamaruddin chanced upon the cottage of a hermit. All that the sage could offer him was loaves of round dry baked bread (*kulcha*) and plain water. The exhausted noble appeased his hunger fully and, despite his host's insistence, he could eat no more than seven *kulchas*. The hermit then said, "My son, you have eaten seven *kulchas*. Your family will rule for seven generations. God bless you."

This encounter, people say, is the reason why the first Nizam had a representation of the *kulcha* on the flag of his dynasty. The Nizam himself contradicted this interpretation. He explained that the symbol on the flag did not signify the *kulcha*, but the moon, because "my name Qamaruddin means the moon of my faith."[2] But so strong was the legend that as late as 1899, the sixth Nizam approved a modified design of the flag, confirming that the circular emblem stood for the *kulcha*.[3]

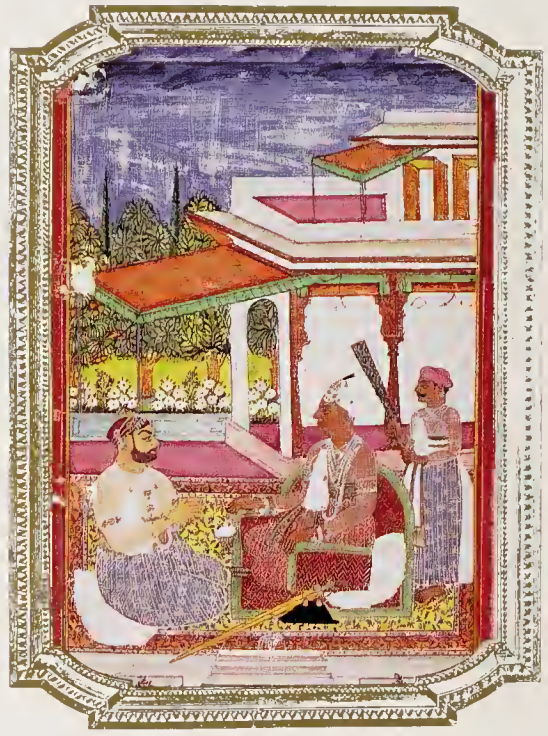
Qamaruddin lived through the rule of eight Mughal emperors and actively served four of them. Though he was their viceroy, the Nizam became more powerful than the emperor in Delhi. But, contrary to popular belief, the Nizam never declared independence. Rather, Qamaruddin acknowledged Mughal overlordship even when he defeated and killed the emperor's appointee as governor of the Deccan. In the Nizam's testament, recorded just before his death, he urged his son and successor always to be loyal to the Mughal emperor.[4]

When Qamaruddin died in 1748, after a long and distinguished career, he was succeeded by his son Nasir Jung, whom he had nominated earlier. Despite this, internecine warfare soon flared up and Nasir Jung was killed in battle in 1750. His sister's son Muzaffar Jung became the next Nizam, but he in turn was killed after a rule of barely six weeks. In the battles for

# ASAF JAHI GENEALOGY

Mir Qamaruddin
Nizam-ul-Mulk Fateh Jung

Asaf Jah I
(r. 1724-1748)



Mir Akbar Ali Khan
Sikandar Jah

Asaf Jah III
(r. 1803-1829)

Asaf Jah II
(r. 1762-1803)

Mir Nizam Ali Khan

Asaf Jah IV
(r. 1829-1857)

Mir Farkhonda Ali Khan
Nasir-ud-Daula

Mir Tahniath Ali Khan
Afzal-ud-Daula

Asaf Jah V
(r. 1857-1869)

Mir Osman Ali Khan

Asaf Jah VII
(r. 1911-1948)

Asaf Jah VI
(r. 1869-1911)

Mir Mahboob Ali Khan

succession the British and French supported rival contenders. In 1751, Salabat Jung became the Nizam, with the help of the French. But the British encouraged his brother, Nizam Ali Khan, to rise against him. This opposition forced Salabat Jung to enter into a treaty with the British in 1759, and in return for their protection he transferred vast east coast territories to them from the French. By 1761, French influence was steadily on the wane. During this tumultuous period, one-third of the area held by the first Nizam was lost to the British.

The three Nizams who succeeded Qamaruddin in the 14 years that followed his death were not granted the title of Asaf Jah by the Mughal emperor. So, in a strange fulfilment of the hermit's prophecy, only seven Asaf Jahs are officially counted, though actually ten Nizams ruled the Deccan. In 1763, the second Asaf Jah, Nizam Ali Khan, shifted the capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad.

Rivalry with the Marathas continued over the decades. In 1795, Nizam Ali Khan was defeated in battle against his old foes and had to cede Daulatabad, Ahmednagar and Sholapur to the Marathas. In addition he had to pay an indemnity of Rs 30,000,000. The beleaguered Nizam Ali Khan entered into the Treaty of Subsidiary Alliance with the British in 1798. This eliminated the French influence altogether and made the Nizam's subservience to the British complete. In the historic war against Tipu Sultan of Mysore, the Nizam sided with the British. When Tipu was defeated and killed in 1799, the Nizam gained the districts of Cudappah and Khammam as his share of the booty.

## The British and the Nizam

Since 1779, the British had stationed a Resident in Hyderabad. In the beginning his role was ambassadorial, but as British influence increased, the Resident became more powerful, overseeing the Nizam's actions and the governance of the state. In accordance with the expanding power of the British representative, Captain James Kirkpatrick (Resident from 1798 to 1805) decided to build an official residence for himself. He sounded out the Prime Minister, who secured Nizam Ali Khan's approval of the proposal in principle. When the plan was presented to the Nizam, he took one look at it and threw it away in horror. Crestfallen, Kirkpatrick asked the Prime Minister why he had been summarily rejected. The latter just laughed: "Resident Bahadur," he replied, "you made the plan on the paper so big that it seemed equal to the size of His Highness's dominions. How could he agree to part with that?"[5]

The impressive British Residency at Hyderabad, built by James Kirkpatrick.

The next time Kirkpatrick submitted the same proposal on a piece of paper the size of a visiting card. The Nizam readily agreed to the plan, and Kirkpatrick proceeded to build the Residency. The structure was so imposing that, in 1817, the Governor General's agent Sir John Malcolm described it as 'a palace'. Later, he wrote, "It is only surpassed in splendour ... by the Government House in Calcutta. That in Madras cannot be compared to it."[6]

From the beginning of the 19th century, the role of the Resident increased steadily and he assumed greater powers over affairs in the state. Successive Nizams were compelled to accept their diminished importance because the East India Company provided them protection against their detractors, for which the Nizams had to pay vast sums of money. Frustrated in his attempt to rule effectively, the third Nizam Sikandar Jah and his successor Nasir-ud-Daula (r.1829-57) withdrew from the affairs of the state and left virtually everything to the Resident. In 1843, the Company even proposed the appointment of the Resident as the Prime Minister (*diwan*) of the state, to ensure better governance and to secure the repayment of the Nizam's debts to the British. Nasir-ud-Daula refused to agree to the proposal. However, just three years later he had no choice but to accept the Resident's nominee as *diwan*.

## Financial Problems

The genesis of Hyderabad's financial problems clearly dates to the establishment in 1812 of the 'Hyderabad Contingent', a large British-Indian army that was permanently stationed to defend the Nizam's territories. The Contingent was set up in Secunderabad, generally known as the 'twin city' of Hyderabad. It was the responsibility of the Nizam to support this army and that entailed considerable expense. In times of peace this colossal expenditure was simply not justified. Sikandar Jah took enormous loans at high rates of interest from the mercantile firm William Palmer & Co to enable payment to the British for the maintenance of the troops. Considering these financial dealings detrimental to the prosperity of the Nizam's government and to British interests in the region, the East India Company intervened. William Palmer & Co eventually collapsed and the state's finances continued in a deplorable condition.

In spite of the Nizam drawing upon all available resources, including his personal wealth, taking huge loans and sacrificing territory to pay for the upkeep of the troops, Hyderabad was perpetually in debt to the British. In 1853, Nizam Nasir-ud-Daula was forced to assign Berar, Raichur, and Bhir permanently to the British. In return they agreed to write off the Nizam's dues and to meet the expenses of the Contingent out of the revenues of their newly-acquired areas.

The Asaf Jahi fortunes saw some improvement in the closing years of Nasir-ud-Daula's reign. This can be attributed to the appointment of Salar Jung I, Nawab Mir Turab Ali Khan, as *diwan*. A man of vision and an astute administrator, he transformed a medieval oligarchy into a modern state. One of his decisions altered the course of Indian history – he sided with the British during the 1857 nationalist revolt. A week later, Nasir-ud-Daula died, unaware of the ferment that had broken out in the north. The revolt had spread and the Governor of Bombay, in a nervous telegram to the Governor General, had said: "If the Nizam goes, all goes."[7]

View of the bazaar in the vicinity of the Charminar and Mecca Masjid, Hyderabad, late 19th century.

There was considerable resentment against the British in Hyderabad and it was expressed in the form of public protests against Salar Jung for aiding the British during the revolt. The *diwan's* action, though strongly disapproved of by the people, proved to be beneficial to the state. On the collapse of the nationalist revolt, the British out of gratitude made generous presents to the Nizam, wrote off arrears of Rs 5,000,000, and returned Raichur, Doab and Naldurg to the state.

It was thus a relatively stable Hyderabad when Afzal-ud-Daula assumed power as Nizam in 1857, after the death of his father. It was during his rule that Salar Jung carried out his most constructive reforms. The *diwan* introduced changes in every sphere of government, wiping out the financial deficit and ensuring a surplus budget by effecting economies and improving administration. He reformed the revenue system and made the judiciary independent. He connected Hyderabad with the Bombay-Madras railway line in 1874. The post and telegraph were also introduced into the state during Salar Jung's tenure. In all, Salar Jung I dominated the affairs of Hyderabad state for three decades until his death in 1883. He served three successive Nizams, including a spell of regency for the infant Nizam VI. It was his grandson, Salar Jung III, also *diwan* for a short period, who assembled an outstanding collection of art that is housed in a museum in Hyderabad named after him.

## The Sixth Nizam

Mahboob Ali Khan was just two-and-a-half years old when his father Afzal-ud-Daula died in 1869. There was a rush of aspirants to the throne, including the late Nizam's brother, who had the backing of the British. In view of the conflicting claims, nobles of the Hyderabad court decided to install the child as the next Nizam immediately. The toddler was led by the hand to the royal seat (*gaddi*) and the nobles paid obeisance to their new ruler. The death of the fifth Nizam and the accession of the sixth was then publicly announced, and the Resident was informed of the *fait accompli*.

Mahboob Ali Khan, aged two-and-a-half years, attired in royal regalia on the occasion of his coronation, 1869.

The British representative was outraged that the Viceroy's permission had not been obtained and that he too had not been informed about the accession of the new Nizam. He was told that no permission was ever taken earlier, and none was considered necessary. British displeasure at this turn of events took an unusual form. Until then, the Resident and his officials attended the Nizam's *durbar*, or public audience, bareheaded and barefooted, and sat on the floor along with the Indian nobles as a sign of respect to the ruler. But now the Resident announced that he would attend the *durbar* without headgear, but wearing shoes; also that he and his entourage would sit on chairs and not on the floor. The Nizam's court had to concede this condition. However, it would have been unseemly if the Indians sat on the ground while the British were seated on chairs. So an ingenious

arrangement was worked out. While chairs were placed on one side, the level of the other side was raised with low wooden platforms, on which white sheets were spread. The accession of the child Nizam thus marked a shift in the old court etiquette, subtly underlining the elevated status of the British with respect to the Indians.[8]

Mahboob Ali Khan was formally installed as Nizam when he attained majority in 1884, an occasion that marked the beginning of a colourful but financially disastrous reign. The sixth Nizam believed that money was there to be spent and his unconstrained excesses were a source of great anxiety to the British Resident, who feared he might bankrupt the state. When the Viceroy Lord Ripon visited Hyderabad for Mahboob Ali Khan's investiture, he cautioned the young ruler: "Look to your finances. Disordered finances are the ruin of states. It is so everywhere, it is very especially so in India. Carelessness and extravagance in financial matters means – first, heavy taxation; then, gradual impoverishment and ruin of the people; subsequently, loans with increasing interest; and finally, bankruptcy."[9] But his predilection for financial mismanagement could hardly be checked.

Mahboob Ali Khan poses with his kill, 1895. His fondness for tiger hunts probably inspired the design for the belt buckle, *Baglus Almas Sher* (NJ 95.116).

The sixth Nizam's lavish hospitality and elaborate hunts were legendary, and Hyderabad soon became a compelling destination for visiting European royalty and aristocracy – the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught (younger son of Queen Victoria), Grand Duke Alexander of Russia and Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria were some of Mahboob Ali Khan's illustrious guests. He was the first Nizam who conversed in English and wore Western clothes. It is said that he never wore the same suit twice, and one entire wing in his palace, Purani Haveli, was occupied by the largest wardrobe in the world, full of suits, shoes, hats and other accessories. It was accommodated in a hall almost 40 metres in length, with cupboards on both sides extending double height to the ceiling.

Royal party (*left*) inspecting the Nizam's jewels on the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught to Hyderabad, January 23-26, 1889. The enormous wooden wardrobe (*right*) of the sixth Nizam, Mahboob Ali Khan, occupies an entire wing in the Purani Haveli palace.

Candid-camera shot of Mahboob Ali Khan in 1905, as he relaxes and attends to correspondence in a camp devoid of all royal paraphernalia.

Mahboob Ali Khan was a popular ruler, despite his eccentricities and extravagance. He would often venture out incognito into the city at night to see how the common people lived and to learn what they thought of him. His humanity was revealed in the great flood of 1908, the worst in Hyderabad's history, which claimed more than 15,000 lives. Mahboob's response to the calamity was to throw open the gates of his palace to the refugees. The Nizam was told that the flood was caused by the anger of the Hindu goddess Bhavani who had to be appeased. Mahboob carried a silver plate with five earthen lamps on it, and paid homage before the image of the deity, an exceptional gesture on the part of the Muslim ruler. People believed that the floods started receding after the performance of this ritual.[10]

There was a marked difference between Mahboob's official and his personal positions. To the British, the Nizam of Hyderabad was the 'premier prince' of the Indian empire. But despite his many honorifics and titles, to his subjects he was simply 'Mahboob Pasha, the beloved king'! For them he was a holy spirit, the invocation of whose name, 'Ya Mahboob', was sufficient to ward off the effect of snake-bite. Even today, an offering of fresh flowers can occasionally be seen on his simple grave inside the Mecca Masjid in Hyderabad, placed there by a grateful person cured of snake-bite by the mere utterance of his name. He was a benign and generous ruler, who wrote romantic verses in Persian and Urdu. On August 26, 1911, he sought the haven of Falaknuma, his palace 'pointing to the sky', where he died on August 29, at the young age of 45 .

## Nizam VII

Mahboob Ali Khan's son, Mir Osman Ali Khan, succeeded him as the seventh Asaf Jah in 1911. Unlike the progeny of other Indian princes, Osman Ali Khan did not have a public school education; he received instruction from British and Indian tutors within the confines of the palace. According to the contemporary historian V K Bawa, "because of the lack of such an experience, he was unable to see himself except as the centre of the universe, which he regarded as revolving around him. The traditions of his family, transmitted from generation to generation, had inculcated in him a sense of his own importance which never left him."[11]

Osman Ali Khan was reputed to be the richest man in the world, but he really had no idea of the extent of his wealth. This was not surprising for a man whose personal estate yielded Rs 25,000,000 a year. Much of his wealth was gained by *nazar* – gifts of gold or jewels offered to the ruler as expressions of submission and loyalty – by those who were granted the privilege of an audience. Every 'gazetted' officer of the state presented him with *nazar* twice a year – on the festival of Id and on his birthday. The minimum amount of *nazar* was one gold coin and four silver.

Osman Ali Khan observed the custom of *nazar* with zeal and vigour and amassed vast quantities of wealth. He would send small gifts, usually a mango or some other delicacy, to some randomly chosen subject who was expected to express his gratitude by offering *nazar*. At banquets, he would send across a glass of champagne to some noble, and such public demonstrations of favour were received with gratification and reciprocated with gifts of gold. When the Nizam honoured noblemen by visiting their homes or attending any function, gratitude took the form of gold sovereigns.

The man who possessed so much money lived an extremely frugal life. He wore the same cap for years, even when the ring of sweat and oil on its rim cried out for replacement. His clothes showed no signs of having been ironed. Numerous visitors to his residence have testified to his cluttered, undusted drawing room. His jewels lay bundled up in all sorts of places, from locked cellars to the floor underneath his bedstead; yet it is said he knew exactly where his various gems were kept.

Though parsimonious in his lifestyle, Mir Osman Ali Khan made some important contributions to the state. Parts of the old city destroyed by the floods of 1908 were re-built; the river Musi was tamed; a scheme for providing protected water was implemented; and a wide bazaar, 'Patthar Gatti,' was laid up to the Charminar, Hyderabad's best-known monument. The seventh Nizam did not build any palaces. Instead, he constructed many of the stately buildings like the Osmania University, the Osmania Hospital, the High Court and the State Central Library that rise to embellish the city's skyline. Of these, the Osmania University is an outstanding example of the fusion of Hindu and Islamic styles of architecture.

The seventh Nizam had a longer string of honorifics and titles than his father – Ala Hazrat Lieutenant General His Exalted Highness Asaf Jah Muzafar-ul-Mulk wa-al-Mamalik, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Nizam-ud-Daula, Nawab Sir Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur, Fateh Jung, Rustam-e-Dauran, Arastu-e-Zaman, Sipah Salar, Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire, Knight Grand Cross of Bath and Faithful Ally of the British Government. He was the foremost prince of the British Raj who, along with only four other rulers – the Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda, the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and the Maharaja of Mysore – was accorded the highest salute of 21 guns. The exclusive title of 'His Exalted Highness' was conferred upon him in 1918 for services rendered to the British by way of troops and money during the First World War.

Falaknuma, Mahboob's magnificent palace which he received as a gift, situated on a hill-top on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

## Political Problems

Before the close of the 19th century and with the establishment of the Indian National Congress in 1885, the first stirrings toward independence began to be felt in the country. In due course, the movement spread to the princely states including Hyderabad. By 1920, the demand for responsible government began to be raised increasingly.

One political development around this time was the establishment of the Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen (the Council for the Union of Muslims) in 1927.[12] The Ittehad, as it was popularly known, started as a cultural-religious organization, but soon acquired the character of the Muslim League in British India. Its president, Bahadur Yar Jung, demanded that Hyderabad should be declared an Islamic State. Kasim Razvi, who became the president in 1946, set up a para-military wing of the party called the Razakars (volunteers) which demanded Islamic statehood for Hyderabad.

Countering the Razakar agitation was the Indian National Congress which was banned before it could be established in 1938. So, its leaders were forced to go underground within the state. The Communist Party was established in 1939. In 1941 a strike took place in the Nizam's Railways followed by one in the textile mills. Popular protests were organised in the rural areas, urging the farmers to rebel against the tyranny of the landlords. If the 1930s were a troubled decade for the Nizam of Hyderabad, the next decade proved even worse.

The young bejewelled princes Azam Jah and Muazzam Jah, sons of Mir Osman Ali Khan, 1911. Prince Azam Jah's *dastar* is adorned with the crescent and star jewel – *Brooch Almas Chantara Numa Kanval* (NJ 95.5).

## Police Action

On June 11, 1947, two months before India attained independence, Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan declared his intention to make Hyderabad an independent state, a move that was welcomed by the Ittehad but deplored by the Congress and other parties. After the independence of India in August 1947 there were protracted negotiations between the Government of India and the Nizam, resulting in signing of the Standstill Agreement between the two on November 29, 1947. It ensured the *status quo ante*. However, the agreement did not work out, mainly because of violations of the conditions by the Nizam.

As a result of the breakdown of relations between the two, the Government of India launched Police Action against Hyderabad State on September 13, 1948, in a military exercise code-named 'Operation Polo'. After just four days, the Nizam's army surrendered unconditionally to the Indian troops. On September 18 the state was incorporated into the Union of India. Within a year, the Military Governor had abolished all the *jagirs* (land-holdings from which the owner collected revenue), which accounted for one-third of the territory of the state. The land-owners (*jagirdars*) were given compensation in terms of annuities, which were spread over

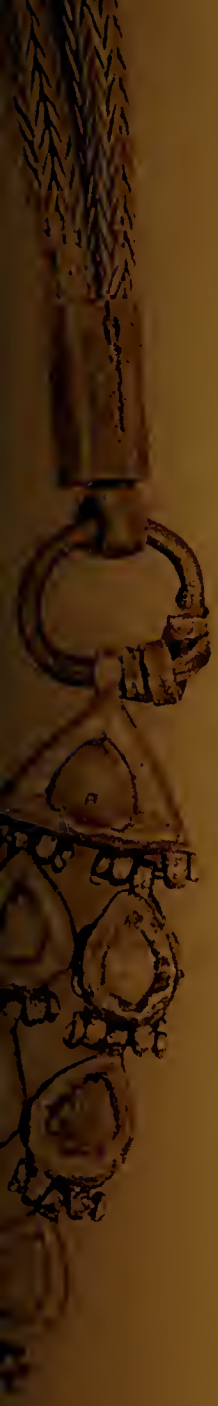
a period of five to ten years. The Nizam became the constitutional head of Hyderabad with the designation of Raj Pramukh after promulgation of the Constitution of India in 1950.

In 1956, the states in India were reorganized on a linguistic basis. Hyderabad was trifurcated. Its Telugu-speaking districts merged into the new state of Andhra Pradesh, with Hyderabad city as its capital. Osman Ali Khan asked to be relieved as constitutional head of the state. He retreated into his palace, King Kothi, though the old faithful still paid him court.

The Nizam had an extensive household, that included numerous begums, dependants and servants with their families. His first two sons enjoyed official status. But both of them had flamboyant and extravagant lifestyles, which resulted in their incurring huge debts, which the Nizam had to discharge on pain of blackmail. He learnt that on his illness his elder son, the Prince of Berar, had written to the Government of India to recognise him as the next Nizam, since his father was on his death bed. In sheer disgust, Osman wrote to the government asking that he be superseded and in his place, his grandson, Barkat Ali Khan, Prince Mukarram Jah, be recognized as Nizam VIII. On the Nizam's death in 1967, the young prince was duly installed in a ceremony attended by the superseded father. However, his tenure was short-lived. Two years later, all titles of the Indian princes were withdrawn and in 1971 even their privy purses were abolished.

Azam Jah, the Prince of Berar, with his wife Princess Durreshahwar and eldest son, Barkat Ali Khan, Mukarram Jah, 1934.

Osman Ali Khan's death marked the end of a notable chapter in the history of Hyderabad. The Asaf Jahs ruled for 224 years. They had inherited a state strongly marked by its composite culture. That was the legacy of the founder of Hyderabad, the liberal poet-king Mohammed Quli Qutb Shah who had procliamed that the basis of all faiths is love. Sarojini Naidu, Hyderabad's most distinguished daughter, renowned as 'the nightingale of India', had said: "Hyderabad has a way of setting the seal of her special tradition on all her sons and daughters, investing them, irrespective of their communities and beliefs, with a subtle kinship whose claims have seldom been denied".[13] More than half a century after these words were uttered, they still ring true.



# THE SALE

On January 12, 1995 a jewellery sale that had spanned 23 years and had gripped the attention of people all over the world was finally concluded. In 1972, when the Government of India was offered an opportunity to acquire the Nizam of Hyderabad's jewellery collection, it embarked upon one of the most protracted, complicated and legally-tangled transactions in modern Indian history. In order to understand the complex series of developments, it is necessary to retrace the events leading up to the sale of the jewels.

On September 18, 1948, Hyderabad was incorporated into the Union of India and the integration of the princely territories into the nation was complete. Broad principles on the bifurcation of properties and assets between former rulers and the newly constituted states were evolved. The princes received tax-free privy purses[1] and certain private properties, including palaces, were conceded. "With regard to investments and cash balances, only those to which the State could lay no claim were to be recognized as the private property of the ruler." Though no claim was made on personal jewellery, "such ancestral jewellery as was 'heirloom' was to be preserved for the ruling family; and valuable regalia would remain in the custody of the ruler for use on ceremonial occasions."[2] Each maharaja was required to submit a detailed inventory of land, securities and cash held as private property and a list of personal and state jewellery. The Government of India guaranteed the erstwhile rulers and members of their immediate family all the dignities and personal privileges that they had hitherto been enjoying. Succession to the title was also ensured, but they had to forego all administrative control over their former subjects and territory.

Mir Qamaruddin, founder of the Asaf Jah dynasty, was a warrior of great courage.

Over the next two decades, changes were carried through, gradually but resolutely. The Government of India imposed income, wealth and inheritance taxes on the former maharajas. In 1969 their titles were abolished, since in a modern democracy there was no place for a raja, maharaja, Nizam or nawab. In 1971, the privy purses too were discontinued.

The princes had barely recovered from the loss of their kingdoms and the huge income accruing from the revenues of the state, when they were compelled to come to terms with the burden of maintaining themselves and their families in the lifestyle to which they were accustomed.

To assume sole financial responsibility for the upkeep of their enormous palaces and flocks of dependent servants and retainers was a task for which they were neither trained nor financially competent. It became imperative for the maharajas to organize their personal affairs and secure their finances. Accustomed to a lavish and, in many cases, profligate way of life, and unused to earning a living, few could come to terms with their changed circumstances. Without exception they all turned to their treasuries and the works of art in their palaces to fund their leisure and to support the royal household.

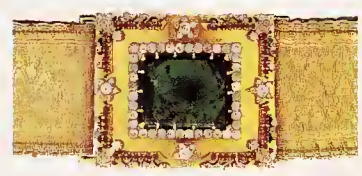
*Sarpech Kalan Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas Ba Awaiza-i-Zamarrud* NJ 95.60

Jewels were the first to be liquidated – their portability coming in handy during a time of pressing need. Shrewd and percipient, none of the rulers had included valuable 'heirloom' jewels in the lists that they had submitted to the government. Few jewels were declared for wealth tax and even fewer were categorized as state regalia – that is, property acquired with funds from the state exchequer and which was to be held in trust for the nation. India became a hunting ground for foreign gem dealers who had earlier come as sellers. Renowned jewellery firms like Cartier, Bulgari and Van Cleef & Arpels, and notable gem dealers such as Harry Winston and Jack and Hubert Rosenthal swept through India, buying gems and jewels from rulers eager to encash idle wealth – of no use any more as emblems of pomp and power. To camouflage their provenance, countless ornaments were broken up and sold privately; gems were re-cut, wiping out their identity and in the process their entire early history.

*Kanthi Goshwara-i-Marvareed Wa Almas* NJ 95.2

Negotiations between the Nizam and the Indian government on issues related to the merger of Hyderabad continued up to January 1950, when a formal agreement was signed on the rights, privileges and dignities, the dynastic succession and the privy purse of His Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad.[3]

One of the first steps initiated by the Government of India after the annexation of Hyderabad was to take over the Nizam's *sarf-e-khas* (lands inherited in lineal descent, whose income was utilised to maintain the 'dignity of the dynasty'). The revenue from these lands yielded the Nizam a surplus of Rs 124 lakh (Rs 12,400,000) per annum. For this loss, he received, in addition to his privy purse of Rs 50 lakh (Rs 5,000,000), a compensatory annual allowance of Rs 50 lakh for his lifetime.



*Baglus Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas Wa Yakhoot* NJ 95.49

The situation in the Nizam's court was dire. A sudden and immediate acculturation to the drastically changed circumstances had to be effected. Osman Ali Khan had four official wives, and in 1955 his household was enormous. He had many begums, a vast number of children, innumerable *khanazads* (adopted children), daughters-in-law, countless grandchildren and more than 1,000 servants and retainers.

*Sumran Zamarrud* NJ 95.56/1-2

When it became apparent that things would never be the same again, a prudent and perspicacious Osman Ali Khan commenced the complex task of safeguarding the Asaf Jah wealth and the uncertain future of his heirs and

dependents. He liquidated a portion of his enormous fortune and allocated it to a series of trusts, which would achieve this object. Between 1949 and 1964, Osman Ali Khan created a total of 54 trusts,[4] each endowed with a large corpus of cash and jewels to cater to every conceivable need of his extended family and his subjects.

The most unique trust was 'H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust'[5] incorporated on March 29, 1951 – the only one of its kind to be established by an Indian ruler. To this trust, Osman Ali Khan, "out of the natural love and affection which he bears towards his relatives", assigned 107 items – which were his personal jewels including state regalia, according to the list he had submitted to the Government of India in 1949. After allocating gifts to his grandsons and granddaughters, he also created 'H.E.H. The Nizam's Supplemental Jewellery Trust' which was incorporated on February 28, 1952.[6] The present collection comprises a total of 173 items as listed in the Government of India inventory of the jewels, though the actual number of ornaments is far higher.[7]

Osman Ali Khan stipulated that the jewels assigned to H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust could be sold only after his death and the death of his son Azam Jah, Prince of Berar (whom he had passed over in the succession). The trust also laid down very specific instructions on what was to be done with the jewels. Out of the 107 items listed in the First Schedule, a gem-encrusted sword, a dagger and a pearl rosary were to be transferred to the Sacred Relics Trust after Osman Ali Khan's death; two gem-set swords were to be given as wedding gifts to Mukarram Jah and Mufakkam Jah, the two eldest grandsons of Osman Ali Khan. Twenty-two items were set aside as state regalia in the Fourth Schedule, to be used by the successor-in-title as long as he remained the Nizam of Hyderabad for "any special ceremonial or festive occasion." The Nizam also stipulated that the 49 articles listed in the Fifth Schedule "shall as far as possible not be sold...except in case of extreme or grave emergency arising out of serious financial calamity befalling the family of the Settlor;" the remaining jewellery could be sold, exchanged, or altered as deemed necessary by the trustees.

The entire collection of jewels assigned to 'H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust', laid out on a table in King Kothi and photographed immediately after the formation of the trust in 1951. Jewels and swords that were not acquired by the government are clearly visible.

Osman Ali Khan directed that if the Asaf Jah dynasty were to come to an end and there should be no Nizam of Hyderabad existing, the trustees shall "hand over all the articles specified in the Fourth Schedule...to the person who shall have last held the title of the Nizam of Hyderabad." Accordingly, after the abolition of titles and privy purses, Mukarram Jah received the dynastic jewels of the Asaf Jah Nizams.[8] The whereabouts of these ornaments, which included a seven-strand pearl necklace, diamond and emerald necklaces, armbands, buttons and rings and a magnificent turban ornament with briolette diamond drops (seen in photographs of Mahboob Ali Pasha and Osman Ali Khan – page 48), can only be speculated upon. These, together with the vast quantities of pearls, caskets of gems and the legendary Nizam diamond have vanished forever!

Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II, established Hyderabad as the capital of the Deccan.

The Supplemental Jewellery Trust was structured in a similar manner. A total of 144 items were assigned to this trust. The principal beneficiaries were Osman Ali Khan's second son, Prince Muazzam Jah Bahadur, his daughters Shahzadi Begum Pasha and Mehr-un-nissa Begum, and his third and fourth wives, Ekbal Begum and Gowhar Begum. The present collection acquired from both these trusts[9] constitutes a minuscule fraction of the Hyderabad treasury of jewels and gemstones believed to have once been worth over $500,000,000.

In 1967, Osman Ali Khan died, and after the death of his eldest son Azam Jah in 1970, the trustees set in motion the task of dissolving the trusts and distributing the jewels and funds realized from their sale to the various beneficiaries. Accordingly, in July 1972 a memorandum was submitted on behalf of the jewellery trusts to the then Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, requesting her to consider the purchase of jewellery belonging to the Nizam of Hyderabad by the Union of India (so that the jewellery could be retained in India) and the establishment of a special museum to house the collection.

Sikandar Jah, Nizam III, after whom Hyderabad's twin-city of Secunderabad is named.

The unprecedented offer to the Government of India comprised 89 items from H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust, 84 pieces from H.E.H. The Nizam's Supplemental Jewellery Trust and 161 items from H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery for Family Trust. The proposal was carefully examined by the Ministry of Finance and in October 1973, the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare set up an expert committee with Nihar Ranjan Ray as Chairman, Karl Khandalavala, Anand Krishna and Rajmal Surana as members and C Sivaramamurthi as the convener.

Nasir-ud-Daula's rule was marked by loss of territory and immense financial debt.

Their task was to assess the items of jewellery which could be acquired keeping in view the provisions of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972.[10] All the items initially offered were not presented for inspection by the trustees. From among the group of 41 jewels that were produced by the trustees, the committee recommended the acquisition of 18 items – 13 were categorized as antiquities and five as notable items. However, due to budgetary constraints, the jewels could not be purchased.

In March 1975, the government authorized the formation of a Negotiating Committee of Secretaries of the principal government departments to determine a just and fair price and to negotiate the terms of the sale. The trustees were granted permission to sell the remaining 23 pieces after clearance from the Central Board of Direct Taxes. The government also felt that the "Ministry of Finance should examine the acquisition of selected items of jewellery of great historical and cultural value and unique in character belonging to other former princes." In spite of protracted deliberations between the trustees and the government on the price and payment of outstanding taxes, no consensus emerged.

In August 1977, a decision was taken by the Government of India to set up a Gem and Jewellery Museum to house the collection and another expert committee was constituted to make a fresh selection specifically for the museum. The committee[11] inspected 41 items in November 1977 and selected 34. When the recommendations of the committee and the amount determined by the valuers was considered by the government in January 1978, it was felt that it would not be possible to justifiably allocate such a large sum of public money to buy gems and jewellery; but, if the jewels were donated for display in the proposed museum, the government would be happy to accept. If donation was not possible, the trustees could sell the jewellery subject to the provisions of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act.

Afzal-ud-Daula, Nizam V, who inherited a relatively stable Hyderabad.

In February 1978, 89 items belonging to H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust were produced before the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India. Twenty-three were declared as antiquities (which meant that they could not be exported). The trustees now set in motion the process for the sale of the remaining 66 jewels in Bombay by auction to the highest bidder. Jewellers and gem dealers from around the world inspected the jewels and placed their bids. However, before matters could proceed any further, Princess Fatima Fauzia (daughter of Muazzam Jah, the second

son of Osman Ali Khan), one of the beneficiaries, filed a case in the Hyderabad City Civil Court for removal of the trustees and to restrain them from selling the jewellery.

The case finally landed up in the High Court and after due consideration, the matter was dismissed and permission was granted to one Peter Fernandez to purchase 37 items for Rs 20.25 crores (Rs 202,500,000). But jewellers in India were reluctant to lose the opportunity of acquiring a portion of these rare and beautiful pieces set with the finest collection of diamonds and emeralds – gems that were bound to realize astronomical figures in the international gem market. Royal jewels rarely came on the market, never for public sale and definitely not in such quantities. Shantivijay & Co, a private jewellery firm, and Kesholal Dalpatbhai Zhaveri, another prospective buyer, filed a petition in the Supreme Court to restrain the sale.

*Sarpech Khurd Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas* NJ 95.37

In an order dated August 31, 1979, the Supreme Court disposed of all the cases and, to ensure openness and objectivity, directed that the jewellery be sold by open auction to be conducted on September 20, 1979 in the premises of the Supreme Court. To arrive at a correct valuation, the trustees invited internationally renowned auction houses – Sotheby's and Christie's – and other noted gem dealers to assess the collection. Their estimate was far in excess of the trustees' expectations. Once again, prospective buyers including representatives of the Greek shipping magnate Stavros Niarchos and a Dubai merchant banker, Abdulwahab Galadari, assembled in the court. The two prospective buyers sought a guarantee from the government, that they would be permitted to export the items that they purchased. At this juncture, reacting to public opinion against the auction and export of the Nizam's jewels, the Union of India filed an application seeking stay of the auction in order to enable it to take a decision on whether it would allow the export of any of the jewels.

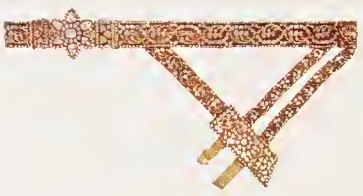
*Baglus Kanval Almas* NJ 95.20

The Supreme Court was informed in September 1979 that the government had decided that the jewels of the Nizam were "art treasures and in national interest they should not be allowed to be taken out of the country." The Antiquities Act was also amended to declare the remaining 66 pieces of jewellery as 'art treasures'[12] to enable their forcible acquisition.

*Paizeb Yakhoot Wa Almas Wa Zamarrud* NJ 95.96/1-2

In 1981, yet another committee was set up by the government under the chairmanship of Pupul Jayakar. Upon recommendation of this committee, a notification for "compulsory acquisition" of select items was issued. The notification was challenged by Prince Mufakkam Jah (grandson of Osman Ali Khan and younger brother of Prince Mukarram Jah), who sought possession of the jewels, permission to auction them to the highest bidder, export them if the successful bidder wished to do so and, above all, questioned the validity of the amendment to the Antiquities Act.

For five years thereafter, the matter remained in the courts. In August 1984, before the process of examination of all the items and the formal declaration of those in the other trusts (besides the Nizam's Jewellery Trust and the Supplemental Jewellery Trust) could be completed, the trustees obtained permission of the Hyderabad City Civil Court to auction some of the items. A total of 64 items was sold



Mahboob Ali Pasha, the boy-Nizam, 1877. Ceremonial attire included swords that were carried in bejewelled shoulder belts and sheaths, such as the *Baglus Almas Parab Partalanuma* (NJ 95.68).

to Popley Kewalram Ghanshyam Das & Co and Choksi N Kantilal & Co, Bombay. In response to repeated enquiries of the whereabouts of the jewels by the Archaeological Survey of India, these jewellers declared that they had disposed of all the items immediately – some intact and others dismantled and the gold and gems sold to registered dealers.

In June 1987 the Government of India set up a Negotiating Committee under the Chairmanship of Sharda Parshad (Information Adviser to the Prime Minister) and a panel of eminent historians and reputed jewellers. Jayant Chawlera, the government jeweller, was on this committee. In 1985, Chawlera had evaluated all the 89 items of H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust at Rs 351,485,000 and the 84 items of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust at Rs 38,137,602. At its meeting in February 1988, the committee decided to confine its attention only to the acquisition of jewellery held in H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust and H.E.H. The Nizam's Supplemental Jewellery Trust, since these jewels were of "historic interest". It was also decided that the jewels should be acquired through a process of negotiation with the trustees.

Accordingly, negotiations for 173 items (89 from the Nizam's Jewellery Trust and 84 from the Supplemental Jewellery Trust)[13] were initiated. In February 1989 – after extensive discussions between the trustees and the government – an application for compromise by both parties was submitted to the Supreme Court. The compromise envisaged an agreement for finalization of an award through arbitration and, by mutual consent, Justice A N Sen was chosen as the sole arbitrator.

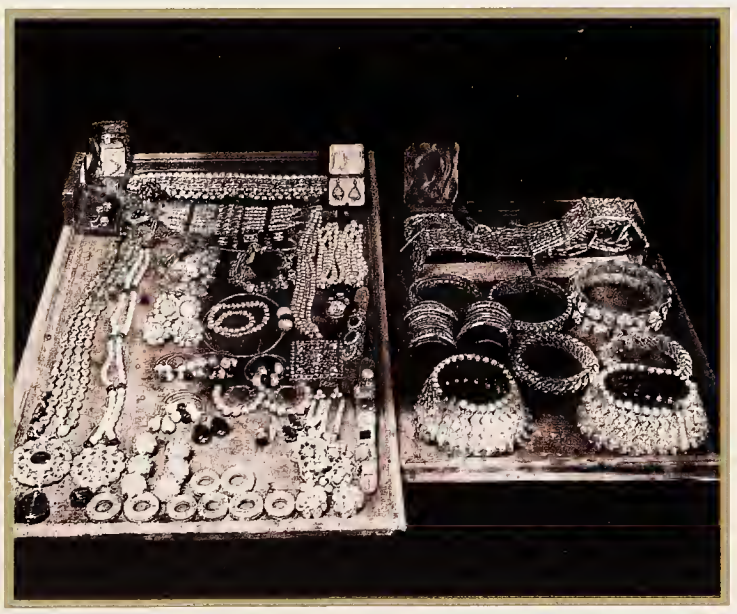
The principal issue which fell for the determination of Justice Sen was the fixation of a just and fair price for the jewellery. Accordingly, the trustees and the government were directed to file their statement of valuation. In the meantime, an application was moved before Justice Sen by the Union of India (on the advice of L P Sihare, Director-General of the National Museum) seeking to limit the scope of arbitration proceedings to the items of jewellery that constituted the trusts' property and not include those which were the state's property. This application was based on the plea that some of the jewels in the two trusts, "did not belong to the Nizam and had vested in the State after the merger of Hyderabad" and therefore the Nizam had no right to include these items in any trust and, more importantly, could not claim any compensation for them. However, Justice Sen, based on the terms of the arbitration agreement, issued his opinion in favour of the trusts.

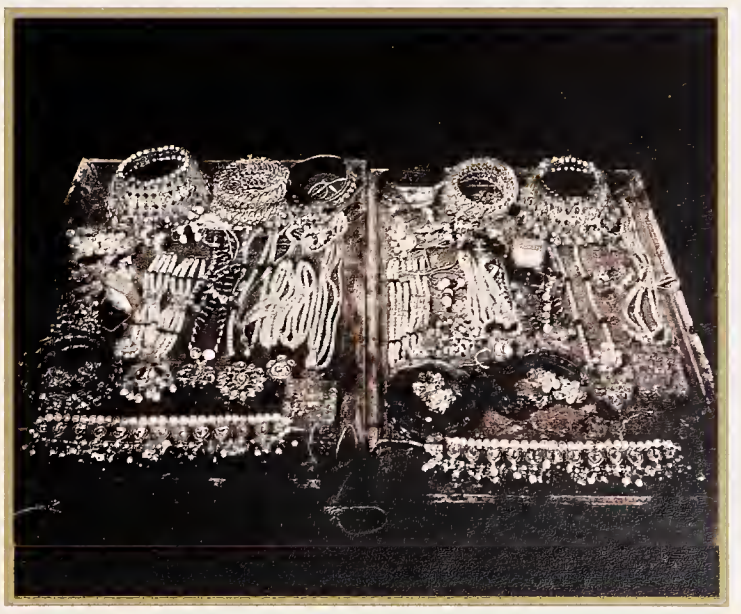
After referring to all the oral and documentary evidence submitted by the two parties, Justice Sen made an award on July 27, 1991. The award stipulated that the Central Government would pay to the trusts a sum of Rs 2,253,733,959, which was fixed as a just and fair price for the 173 items of jewellery, within eight weeks from the date of the award. If the government opted to buy only select items, the trustees had to be intimated within six weeks of the award. In this eventuality, they would be free to sell the remaining pieces and export items subject to prevailing laws.

Mir Mahboob Ali Khan, a charismatic and kind ruler, was greatly loved by his subjects.

The award and its implications were examined by the government in September 1991 and various options considered. These included acceptance of the award as is; rejection of the award and the raising of objections on points of law before the Supreme Court (principally the issue of personal property versus regalia, which constituted state property)[14]; seeking a lowering of the valuation; purchasing only select important items; acquiring all the items and after retaining a few of the most outstanding ones, disposing of the rest by auction or sale abroad and paying the trustees out of the sale proceeds; or allowing the trusts to sell locally or export under strict government supervision to earn foreign exchange and tax on the proceeds. The government filed a petition seeking review of the award and the value determined by Justice Sen.

It was only after extensive deliberations and consideration of all options, that the government finally approved of the purchase of all the jewels in July 1993. The amount was reduced to Rs 1,803,733,959 (the excess amount in the original award was due to a typographical error in the valuation!). The government also sought to make the payment in six equal annual instalments of Rs 30 crores (Rs 300,000,000) each, but urged that the jewels be handed over to the government





Some of the jewels (*left*) that were allocated by Mir Osman Ali Khan to his wives and daughters in the various schedules of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust. Prior to the formation of the jewellery trusts, Osman Ali Khan divided the Asaf Jah heritage and set aside vast quantities of jewellery (*right*) for various members of his immediate family.

on payment of the first instalment. However, the trustees on behalf of the beneficiaries rejected the staggered payment schedule and refused to hand over the jewels until full payment had been made. They pleaded that if the government failed to purchase the collection, they should be permitted to sell the jewellery for the best possible price and even export them, subject to the laws.

After consideration of arguments presented by both parties, the Supreme Court rejected the stand of the trustees and upheld the award made by Justice Sen – especially the valuation of the jewels and the price to be paid by the government. In its decision dated October 20, 1994, the court instructed the government to convey to the trustees their intention of buying the whole or select items of the collection, ordered payment of interest from the date of the award and stipulated that the full and final amount had to be paid in a lump sum before December 31, 1994.

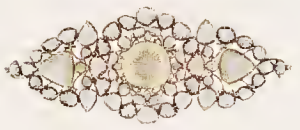
The government decided to purchase the entire collection and conveyed their decision to the trustees. The requisite funds now amounting to Rs 2,178,189,128 (inclusive of interest at the rate of six percent calculated from the date of the award in July 1991) had to be obtained and paid to the two trusts. However, since the money would only be available in January 1995, further time was sought from the Supreme Court and extension was granted for making the payment by January 16, 1995.

The funds were made available on January 9, 1995 and two Reserve Bank of India drafts were drawn (one for Rs 2,064,990,154 to the Nizam's Jewellery Trust and the other for Rs 113,198,974 to the Supplemental Jewellery Trust). The countdown clock was now ticking rapidly and the long-drawn drama appeared to be reaching a climax. A team of government officials and lawyers landed in Bombay at 2.00 a.m. on January 10, 1995.

At 10.00 a.m. on that day, the government team along with Jayant Chawlera arrived at the premises of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, Flora Fountain, as mutually agreed with the trustees. A big surprise was in store for everybody. Officers of the income tax department from Hyderabad were awaiting their arrival at the bank. The government representatives were instructed not to hand over the payment to the trustees since prohibitory orders on the lockers (housing the jewels) had been imposed. These orders would not be lifted and the trustees would not be allowed to operate the lockers till full payment of their tax liabilities had been made. An offer of payment by the trustees, immediately on realization of the Government of India drafts was rejected.

The handsome young prince Mir Osman Ali Khan, *c.* 1900. Buttons for long coats were crafted from precious gems including emeralds and diamonds, *Gundiyan Zamarrud Kalan Almas* (NJ 95.18/1-7).

Negotiations and efforts to break the stalemate continued throughout the day. Telephone lines between Bombay and Delhi buzzed late into the night. Valuable time was passing and the deadline was fast approaching with no solution still in sight. If the payment was not received by the trustees before January 16, they would be free to sell the jewels in the open market. The matter was only resolved at 4.00 p.m. on January 11, after the trustees offered to pay Rs 15 crores (Rs 150,000,000) by demand draft and place Rs 15.3 crores (Rs 153,000,000) in a fixed deposit on which prohibitory orders could be imposed till their tax assessment was finalised (since the final amount payable was still a subject of dispute). This offer was accepted, but it was clarified that the prohibitory orders would only be lifted after verification of the items and the government payment had been handed over to the trustees.



The Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan, with his nobles on his coronation day, 1911. He is attired in royal regalia, including armbands set with diamonds, *Bazuband Almas Neem Kanval* (NJ 95.15/1-2).

On January 12, 1995 the team assembled at the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank at 10.00 a.m. The drafts totalling Rs 2,178,189,128 on behalf of the people of India were given to the representatives of the trusts after receiving an undertaking that the 173 items would be handed over immediately after receiving the payment. It took more than one hour to lift the prohibitory orders, only after which the bank permitted the trustees to open the lockers. The verification process immediately commenced and continued without a break until after 6.00 p.m. Each item was removed, verified and its authenticity certified by Chawlera – the one person who had seen, handled and evaluated the jewels several times over a span of 15 years. Meanwhile security arrangements for the jewels were being reviewed, since the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank was not willing to store the jewels temporarily. The Reserve Bank of India willingly agreed to provide vaults for the storage of the trunks and even offered their van and guards for transportation of the jewels.

The jewellery was repacked into three trunks and loaded into the Reserve Bank of India van along with gunmen and government officials. The entire cavalcade left for the Reserve Bank of India at around 7.00 p.m. from the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, arriving less than 15 minutes later. After completion of all formalities, the trunks were sealed and locked into the vaults at 9.00 p.m. The marathon sale had been completed with four days to spare!

A triumphant team of exuberant officials returned to Delhi the following day – January 13, 1995. Chawlera went home – content in the knowledge that he had played such a pivotal role in the retention of this valuable heritage; the trustees returned to Hyderabad – so many beneficiaries were eagerly anticipating receipt of wealth they had waited so long for. The public exchequer was poorer by almost Rs 218 crores – but the people of India were richer by the acquisition of a large, invaluable and irreplaceable collection of historic jewels!

# THE JEWELS

*Tum iftikhar-i-Dakhan*
*Ho Tajdar-i-Dakhan*
*Tumhen ho Hind mein mumtaz shahryar-i-Dakhan*

*You are the pride of the Deccan, the King of the Deccan;*
*Among the rulers of India, the only one that counts*
*Is the King of the Deccan.*

These words were written in the early 20th century by Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh and last Nizam of the Asaf Jah dynasty. But for many centuries even prior to the arrival of the Asaf Jahs, the Deccan was the pride of India. The rich resources of the region – spices, gold, iron ore, beryls, diamonds, sapphires and pearls – lured a steady stream of treasure-seekers from the Roman empire, Arabia, China, Portugal, Holland, France, England and other countries. The wealthy ports and gem bazaars of the Deccan were flourishing centres of mercantile activity and local rulers amassed untold wealth in their treasuries.

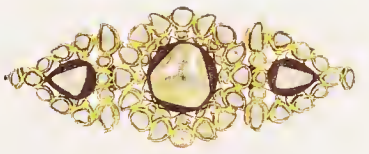
Accounts of these riches date as far back as the 14th century. The eastern and southern military campaigns of Malik Kafur, general of the Delhi Sultan Alauddin Khilji, to Warangal in 1310 and to Madurai in 1311, yielded magnificent treasures. Amir Khusrau, Khilji's court poet, wrote: "If a description of the boxes of jewels were attempted, there is no breast in which it could be contained, nor any heart that could appreciate its value. There were five hundred *mans* of precious stones, and every piece was equal in size to the disc of the setting sun. The diamonds were of such a colour that the sun will have to stare hard for ages before the like of them is made in the factories of the rocks. The pearls glistened so brilliantly that the brow of the clouds will have to perspire for years before such pearls again reach the treasury of the sea. For generations the mines will have to drink blood in the stream of the sun before rubies such as these are produced. The emeralds were of water so fine, that if the blue sky broke itself into fragments, none of its fragments would equal them. Every diamond sparkled brightly; it seemed as if it was a drop fallen from the sun. As to the other stones, their lustre eludes description just as water escapes out of a vessel."[1]

To the Mughal emperors, the wealthy Deccan was a temptation that they could not resist. Thus, for the beginning of the story of the jewels of the Nizams of Hyderabad – and that of the Asaf Jah treasury – one has to travel back in time to the closing decades of the 17th century to the court of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

The Mughal treasury was the most important constituent of the empire and had been accumulated over many generations through dauntless military conquests. Gemstones constituted wealth, and wealth in the form of loose gems could be freely carried and encashed on long military expeditions. Even Aurangzeb, the last of the great Mughals, famed for his zealous almost fanatical antipathy to ostentation, was not averse to augmenting the vast treasury of jewels and gemstones that he inherited from his father Shah Jahan. He undertook interminable military forays and extended the boundaries of the empire to encompass the Deccan in the search for greater wealth.

*Sarpech Bachkani Almas Kanval Wa Munni Zamarrud* NJ 95.12

It was Aurangzeb's desire to subjugate all of India and he led a tireless campaign of war towards this end. But the price of success was constant conflict and the incessant peril of rebels threatening to break away from his control. Provincial governors and commanders of the imperial army established themselves as semi-independent rulers, faithful servants of the emperor in name only. Aurangzeb's death in 1707 was followed by a succession of weak and ineffectual heirs who were unable to safeguard their vast inheritance; recalcitrant subjects, ambitious governors and militant provincial rulers shook the empire. The ones who rose to greatest power and prominence were the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh and the Asaf Jahs of Hyderabad – all imperial servants turned rulers.



*Bazuband Murassa* NJ 95.59/1-2

But in the 224 years that they dominated the Deccan, the Nizams maintained allegiance to the Mughal emperor without openly declaring their independence. Throughout the gradual decline of the Mughal empire after Aurangzeb, the regional viceroys received edicts (*firmans*), robes of honour (*khilat*) and gifts of jewels from the Emperor. Items that were given and received as gifts included turban ornaments (*sarpatti, sarpech, jigha, turra* and *kalgi*), necklaces (*kanthi, har* and *mala*), armbands (*bazuband, bhujband* and *navaratna*), and bracelets (*dastband* and *sumran*).

*Hansli Parab Mai Aweeza Zamarrud* NJ 95.103

On Thursday, November 26, 1772, Nizam Ali Khan received a *firman* from the emperor "along with *Jigha, Sarpech,* and a pearl necklace with a jewelled pendant."[2] Such imperial largesse was received with due pomp, ceremony and servility. On Thursday, April 26, 1781, the Nizam received with honours, "the gift of a turban with the finest embroidered cloth to be worn on it, and an upper garment, with half sleeves, graciously sent by the Emperor."[3] Numerous such occasions are mentioned right up to the middle of the 19th century in *The Chronology of Modern Hyderabad* (a compilation of *firmans,* records of events at court and intelligence reports from various parts of the empire).

Although the Nizams ruled over the Deccan, they adopted the lifestyle, court traditions and the machinery of administration of the state from the Mughals. In the policies of empire too, they embraced the codes established by the Mughals. Inculcation into the importance of wealth and the value of the treasury commenced at a very early age and was reiterated from generation to generation. The time-honoured rationale of an easily transportable treasury was emphasized by Asaf Jah I, who advised his heirs: "...Do you know why it is necessary to carry about the whole

*Dastband Kanval Almas Khurd* NJ 95.84/1-2

Maharaja Chandu Lal, *diwan* to Nasir-ud-Daula, the fourth Nizam, decked in jewels befitting his position in the court. Loyal nobles received gifts of jewels, especially turban ornaments, *Sarpech Zamarrud Wa Almas* (NJ 95.72/5).

treasury with you and keep it near your person? It is because if, at the time of a tumult or disturbance (may it never occur!), the sepoys demand the arrears of their salaries, although they have not more than three months' arrears to claim, in these circumstances, you may be able to order for the payment of their dues at once."[4] In accordance with this dictum, every Nizam spared no effort in augmenting the Asaf Jah treasury.

An old injunction that stipulated that the ruler had to be offered the best of the mined gems remained in force. The Nizam's territories encompassed the Golconda mines that Nizam Ali Khan had prudently retained in 1766 when ceding the Northern Circars to the British. Although considerably depleted, the mines were still active and even as late as the second half of the 19th century, good quality stones were being added to the Hyderabad treasury. India was still the principal market for Colombian emeralds, Basra pearls and Burmese rubies and spinels. As long as the Mughal court was prosperous, the finest textiles and the best gems were only offered to the emperor and not usually available to the provincial rulers. As unofficial successors to the Mughals, the Nizams undoubtedly became the biggest buyers of outstanding gems, and dealers swarmed to the Asaf Jah court. The respect and regard in which these gem merchants were held is evident by the fact that on September 11, 1825, Sikandar Jah conferred the title of Raja on one Rai Balkrishen, a dealer of gems who had "been visiting the palace since two months in connection with the deal of turquoise and diamonds."[5]

The age-old practice of *nazrana* or *nazar*, obligatory in Mughal courts – whereby gifts of gold, gems and jewels were offered to the ruler and his family for the honour of royal audience and as expressions of loyalty – was perpetuated by the Nizams. Nobles and vassals vied with each other in the size and value of the offering – almost always precious stones, gem-studded jewels and gold. Though there are no records to ascertain the quantum of gems and jewels that accrued in this manner, it must have been substantial. Since loyalties to the Nizam were best expressed in the currency of gems, and quantity was a measure of the depth of loyalty, on April 14, 1858, the prime minister (*diwan*) Salar Jung presented Nizam Afzal-ud-Daula with "a few trays of jewels" in addition to horses and an elephant.[6] Even the British Residents, de facto rulers of Hyderabad, adopted the custom, more to ensure allegiance than as expressions of fidelity. The Resident Thomas Sydenham presented the Nizam with "a jewelled *Sarpatti* with *Jigha*, a jewelled *Turra*, a necklace of diamonds and rubies, a *Kanthi* set with pearls, a *Bhujband* and a *Dastband*,"[7] when he visited the Residency on May 20, 1808.

In the time of Mahboob Ali Pasha, "the *nazar* was just touched gently by the Nizam with his right hand as a token of acceptance and the amount was taken back by the presenter."[8] Whatever did catch the fancy of the Nizam – and this included women and property – became his through the

device of *nazar*. Famous *nazar* receipts in the time of the sixth Nizam include the Falaknuma Palace from Vicar-ul-Umara and King Kothi from Kamal Khan.

There was a constant flow of gems and jewels into and out of the treasury. Between 1720 and 1900, *The Chronology of Modern Hyderabad* records that the Nizams gifted hundreds of jewels to rajas, nawabs and nobles as tokens of honour and regard. According to Henry Russell (who served as Resident in 1805), these jewels "are considered, to all intents and purposes, as a branch of public expenditure. An office is kept in which these jewels are preserved and registered; and it is part of the duty of the Minister to provide a proper supply."[9]

While jewels given as gifts were drawn from the separate treasury maintained specifically for this purpose, on rare occasions the Nizam presented his own jewels when the receiver warranted it and the occasion demanded it. Celebrating Tipu Sultan's death and the fall of Seringapatam, the Nizam bestowed his own pearl necklace upon James Achilles Kirkpatrick, the Resident at Hyderabad, in May 1799.[10] On March 22, 1837, the Nizam bestowed "a *Sarpech* with *Jigha*, a jewelled necklace and a *Dastband* on Raja Govind Narayan, jewelled *Sarpech* with *Jigha*, a rope of pearls and a *Dastband* on Naser Yar Jang, a *Sarpatti* and a *Dastband* studded with Jewels from his special collection of jewellery and a *Sarpech* with *Jigha* on the brother of Ali Yawar-ud-daula...."[11]

King Kothi, situated in the heart of Hyderabad city, was the official residence of Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh Nizam. The palace was received as a gift by Osman's father.

Imperial munificence in recognition of valour and allegiance was expressed not only in the award of lands (*jagirs*), but also by gifts of jewels – the number of ornaments presented was in direct proportion to the level of honour bestowed on the noble. On August 9, 1789, Nizam Ali Khan's gifts to one Zafar-ud-Daula Bahadur comprised a *jigha*, a *sarpech*, jewelled *bhujband*, necklace of pearls and a plume.[12] British Residents and visitors to Hyderabad too received imperial munificence in the form of jewels. In 1806, Thomas Sydenham was honoured with "a *Jigha*, a *Sarpech*, a jewelled necklace and a *Pandan*."[13] Gifts of gems were also dispatched to the British monarch. From his land of diamonds, Nizam Ali Khan sent a magnificent stone reputed to weigh 101 carats to King George III in 1785. The diamond was named the Hastings diamond, after Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of India between 1773-85. Prime Minister Salar Jung was the recipient of immense generosity in the form of jewels from the ruler he served so faithfully and competently. On the occasion of the Id *durbar* (public audience) on June 21, 1861, Afzal-ud-Daula presented Salar Jung with an entire suite of jewels comprising a *sarpatti* with a diamond, an emerald *jigha* with emerald drops, a pearl *turra*, a pair of bracelets, and armlets and a rope of pearls.[14]

*Sarpech Yakhoot Wa Kanval Almas* NJ 95.69

*Paizeb Yakhoot Wa Almas Wa Marvareed* NJ 95.95/1-2

*Gundiyan Yakhoot Wa Kanval Almas* NJ 95.46/1-7

*The Chronology of Modern Hyderabad* is replete with accounts of jewels bestowed on various nobles. On October 2, 1786, Nizam Ali Khan "grants to Raja Rai Rayan Bahadur....a jewelled *Dastband*, and a jewelled *Sarpech* on Raja Appa Rao, and jewelled *Sarpech* on Rai Nathool Lal...and a jewelled *Sarpech* on Rajah Bhawanidas, and a jewelled *Jigha* on Rai Daulat Rai."[15] On the wedding of the son of one of his nobles, Nasir-ud-Daula bestowed gifts of a *sarpech* with jewelled *jigha*, a pearl *turra*, a *dastband* and an emerald necklace with diamond pendant.[16]

The practice of presenting jewels continued well into the reign of Mahboob Ali Pasha, although by the end of the 19th century recipients were far fewer and the occasions manifestly infrequent. In the *durbar* held on June 25, 1888, the Nizam bestowed on Sir Asman Jah Bahadur, the Prime Minister, "seven jewels consisting of *Sarpech*, pearl *Turra*, rope of pearls, two strings of large pearls, and a pair of jewelled armlets, a pair of jewelled wrist bands and a pair of jewelled bracelets as a signal honour."[17] With the dawn of the 20th century, the custom of presenting loyal courtiers with gifts of jewels was completely abandoned by Osman Ali Khan.

To further enhance accruals to the treasury and keep the power base of ambitious courtiers under check, the Nizams adopted the feudal practice that empowered the state to appropriate the properties and wealth of a nobleman who died owing money to the state. According to the historian Henry George Briggs, Nasir-ud-Daula routinely advanced loans to his improvident nobles and appropriated their estates as collateral. The properties were only returned once the Nizam determined that the loans had been paid off – and, "it did not do to dispute the accounts of a royal creditor."[18] Even Osman Ali Khan adopted this custom to resuscitate the insolvent finances of Hyderabad and forcibly acquired the property of nobles who were not able to provide a satisfactory explanation of their wealth and assets.

At the time of the first Nizam's death in 1748, the Asaf Jah treasury abounded in gems and jewels accumulated from the defunct Deccani kingdoms and the court of the Nizam in Hyderabad was the most splendid in India, second only to that of Delhi. Nizam-ul-Mulk envisioned that the colossal wealth that he had accumulated would be more than adequate for several generations and counselled his heirs: "You should take into account the resources of income which I posses with an observant eye, and enquire into their significance, and if you follow in my footsteps, the present expenditure remaining the same, they will suffice for the next seven generations, but if you want to have your own way in this matter, it would not take more than a year or two before everything is squandered away."[19] But his successors had neither his mettle nor his genius. They invoked the assistance of the French and the English, both contenders for power in the region – drawing them irrevocably into the politics of Hyderabad state and embarking on a long period of monetary debt – mortgaging land, troops and treasury.

Recorded histories of the Nizams clearly indicate that the treasury was incessantly depleted to fund various political strategies on behalf of the British.

The Marathas were humbled with support from the Nizam's troops and Tipu Sultan was crushed with the help and cooperation of the Nizam. After the assistance rendered in the Tipu affair, the British not only took their time to repay him, but did so without any interest whatsoever.

In 1843, to facilitate repayment of Hyderabad's debt to the British, they agreed to sanction a loan in return for territories, and above all on the condition that "the administration of Hyderabad be made over to the British authorities."[20] Fiercely proud and unwilling to succumb to such coercion tactics, Nasir-ud-Daula (1829-1857) drew upon his private resources and even mortgaged the colossal uncut and unpolished Nizam diamond to meet the expenses of maintaining the troops.

Lord Dalhousie's demand to clear liabilities amounting to Rs 6,400,000 by the end of 1850 compelled the Nizam to take a radical and drastic step – he pawned his jewels to Henry Dighton (a former employee of the state who had established a bank) and raised the necessary amount. In the complex game of power politics that ensued, Dighton is believed to have shifted the jewels to Amsterdam until the loan was paid back. When Salar Jung assumed office as Prime Minister in 1853, his first task was to recover the jewels. In a letter to Henry Dighton dated June 2, 1853, Salar Jung wrote: "I trust you will defer giving effect to the intimation conveyed in Mr Boyson's letter of selling the jewels for a further short time, as you may depend on my using my best efforts to make arrangements for their redemption as early as I can".[21] Subsequently, Salar Jung did redeem the jewels that had been mortgaged by Nasir-ud-Daula. Time after time, the sovereignty of the Nizam was undermined by the interference of the British in the financial matters of the state.

At the end of Afzal-ud-Daula's reign in 1869 the wars were over, the nationalist revolt of 1857 had been suppressed and peace prevailed. Henry George Briggs comments that the Nizam's private treasures were considerable. "In jewels he is probably the richest individual in the world. Almost all the finest jewels in India have been gradually collected at Hyderabad, and have fallen into the Nizam's possession...."[22]

Throughout Indian history, jewels and precious gems passed from generation to generation and became the property of each succeeding ruler, as long as he had the power and wisdom to retain them. In 1869, the two-and-a-half-year old Mahboob Ali Pasha ascended the royal seat (*masnad*) of Hyderabad as the sixth Nizam. A Regency for the child was established under Salar Jung and Shams-ul-Umrah until Mahboob attained majority in 1884. As prime minister for 30 years, Salar Jung effected dynamic changes in the administration. Arrears to the British were paid off, lost territories (with the exception of Berar) were recovered and the pawned Asaf Jahi jewels were redeemed from Henry Dighton.

Mahboob Ali Pasha, 1878, in a finely embroidered coat wearing the diamond belt buckle, *Baglus Almas* (NJ 95.41).

A young Mahboob Ali Khan photographed with his English tutor Captain Godfrey Clerk in 1875.

The sixth Nizam, Mahboob Ali Pasha, poses for a formal portrait, attired in a Western-style suit. He was fond of rings and on his right hand, he is wearing the two rings set with diamonds and rubies, *Challa Almas Kanval Teen Nagi* (NJ 95.28) and *Challa Yakhoot Teen Nagi* (NJ 95.29).

By the time Mahboob Ali Pasha reached majority, Hyderabad's finances were on a firmer footing than they had been for a considerable time. Mudiraj Krishnaswamy, a contemporary chronicler, records, "The Nizam has a very large income, the crown lands alone yielding nearly ten millions of rupees a year. His Highness is, besides, by the constitution of the country, entitled to draw upon the state treasury. With this income he maintains his Household guards and the nobles and officials of his household, who are almost as numerous as those at any European court. But personally he is very wealthy, and the jewels and precious stones preserved at his palace excite the admiration of European princes, and every one else who has the good fortune to see them."[23] Lacking the guidance of his father and the wise counsel of Salar Jung (who died when Mahboob was only 17 years old), reckless expenditure and caprice marked Mahboob's reign.

His extravagance and generosity were legendary. Despite the astronomical quantity of clothes he possessed, however, his personal attire was surprisingly restrained. In an era when other Indian maharajas vied with one another to flaunt their resplendent turban ornaments and dazzling necklaces, the unpretentious appearance of Mahboob is striking. At the 1903 Delhi *durbar* held to celebrate the coronation of Edward VII, the Nizam of Hyderabad led the festivities (page 6). The presence of Mahboob simply attired in a formal Western-style suit in the company of the other bejewelled Indian maharajas prompted the Viceroy Lord Curzon to ask him why he was so plainly dressed. Mahboob replied that "his jewels were with him" and "gestured to the nobles who had accompanied him."[24]

Mahboob Ali Pasha straddled a world that was one-half Mughal and one-half British. Occasions that required jewelled magnificence were rare. He was the epitome of a perfect Victorian gentleman – educated by an English tutor and inculcated in Western manners. He was the first Nizam to wear Western clothes and was inclined to suits, breeches and English hunting gear. But as chief executive and spiritual ruler to approximately 14,000,000 subjects, his *durbars* were conducted in the Mughal tradition and provided an opportunity for traditional attire. Even on these

occasions, though, he abstained from excessive royal paraphernalia and wore few jewels.

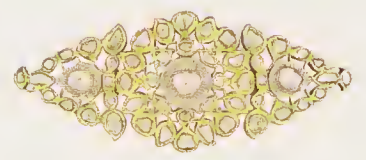
A rare description of a heavily bejewelled prince is recorded when Mahboob Ali Pasha was eight years old and he made his first official state visit to the Residency under Charles Burslem Saunders on August 1, 1874. The young boy-Nizam rode on a majestic elephant accompanied by his two regents. According to a historian: "He wore white which seemed to flow down in crinkles down to his knees. The bosom of his dress seemed to be thickly sewn with diamonds. He wore many strings of diamonds and pearls around his neck and sported a white turban."[25]

A photograph of Mahboob Ali Pasha, wearing an impressive turban ornament and necklaces of pearls and emerald beads with gem-set pendants, *Kanthi Marvareed* (NJ 95.124) and (NJ 95.148).

As he grew older, Mahboob very seldom wore any of the fabulous jewels that he inherited and never travelled out of India. Though for decades, he was not averse to sending all his dirty laundry to be done in Paris via the Peninsular & Oriental steamship line! His reluctance to wear jewels did not stop him from acquiring fabulous ornaments and gems for the treasury. He was reputedly a connoisseur of gems and had a fairly good knowledge of their worth. He is known to have succumbed to the temptation of beautiful stones when they were offered to him, buying them with little thought of the financial prudence of such an acquisition. He purchased the Imperial diamond (later known as the 'Jacob' diamond – NJ 95.89) in spite of vehement opposition from the Resident. His transaction for this purchase in 1891 led to a criminal suit and he had to suffer the indignity of appearing before a commission to give evidence. He later issued a *firman* clarifying his position to placate his irate subjects.[26] The rare 35-carat alexandrite ring (NJ 95.65) and the 22 unmounted emeralds (NJ 95.32/1-22) were also undoubtedly bought by him.

The humiliation of the Jacob affair and constant caution by the British did not motivate Mahboob to alter his life of indulgent excesses. Even as the matter of the propriety of the Jacob transaction was being debated in the Calcutta courts in 1891, a correspondent for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, who visited Hyderabad at the time, recorded the mesmeric grandeur of a ruler, surrounded by unimaginable luxury, in vivid detail: "He entertains on a marvellous scale, and his wealth is lavished in every direction. He is the mightiest of all Indian Princes, and nobles of absolute power in their own provinces compose his Court. The banquets which he loves to give are of singular magnificence. The service is of solid gold. The surroundings are Oriental splendour. The guests are robed in the finest of silks and adorned with jewels, any one of which is worth a fortune. The Nizam's own robe eclipses them all. Made of snow-white silk, it glistens with hundreds of jewels. Ropes of pearls are about his neck and arms. Precious stones and strings of emeralds adorn his dress. The buttons are immense pearls set in diamonds. His presence seems to take one back to the fabulous

Coronation portrait of Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan, wearing spectacular jewels from the Asaf Jah collection. Clearly visible are the diamond necklace, *Kanthi Almas Kanval Wa Parab* (NJ 95.31), and three gem-set armbands, *Bazuband Jaravi* (NJ 95.115/1-2), *Bazuband Almas Wa Mothi* (NJ 95.39/1-2) and *Bazuband Navaratna* (NJ 95.73/1-2).



times of the Arabian Nights. He lives for pleasure alone. The immense revenues, six millions sterling, which every year their subjects give, are his pocket money. His existence is one of enjoyment."[27]

His successor's life would later provide a marked study in contrast. Mahboob's son, Mir Osman Ali Khan, ascended the *masnad* of Hyderabad in September 1911 as the seventh and last Nizam of the Asaf Jah dynasty. His coronation was conducted with all the traditional pomp and splendour of his lineage. He rode in a formal procession, wearing the typical Hyderabad headgear (*dastar*) with "a golden crest, wrapped in front with a jewelled ornament set in gold, a brocade Sherwani designed in vertical stripes, jewelled armlets round the arms and jewelled bracelets on the wrists, a string of pearls, bedecked with glittering diamonds, in the neck."[28]

From the beginning of his rule, Osman was haunted by the omen of the sage who had predicted that the Asaf Jahs would rule for seven generations. Also, the first Nizam had cautioned that the wealth he had accumulated would last for seven generations, only if prudently spent. Encumbered with the legacy of financial mismanagement and interminable interest payments, Osman's reign was diametrically opposite to the excesses of his father.

What exactly Osman inherited in the form of liquid assets is a matter of speculation, in view of the lavish lifestyle that Mahboob had and the unending financial crisis in the state. If stories of the enormous quantity of gems and jewels and gold that is associated with Osman are to be believed, it is obvious that Mahboob had ensured that the personal wealth of the Asaf Jahs remained relatively intact. It was the state treasury that appears to have borne the brunt of his extravagance. Rumours are plentiful of the gold bars that Osman Ali Khan inherited and left strewn around the palace; of the fact that access to the strongroom was barred to everybody and that he alone carried the keys to the treasury tucked away in the inner pocket of his vest; that rarely a day passed without his admiring some of his jewels and that he knew exactly what he had and in which boxes particular jewels and gems were kept.[29] Apocryphal though these tales might be – those who were once close to the Nizam are reluctant to talk – old-timers recall that the treasury in King Kothi was "a long rectangular room approximately 120 feet long and 40 feet wide".[30] It was never cleaned and a thick layer of dust was allowed to settle on everything – so that if anything was removed or even just moved, it would be immediately apparent.

Osman's unquantified wealth reposed not only in land and buildings but, more importantly, in the form of liquid assets (gold and jewels) easily convertible into cash. It was his high liquidity that earned him the title 'richest man in the world'. D F Karaka, the Nizam's unofficial biographer, mentions that "gold was all over King Kothi. It was even under the portico of the palace, packed in covered wagons, the wheels of which had sunk into the ground by the sheer weight of the gold stored inside."[31] The sale of this gold[32] (which was in the form of bars – received as payment of his privy purse and coins received as *nazar*) provided the cash for the trusts that he formed.

What is irrefutable is that the *sarf-e-khas* (crown lands) that Osman inherited were vast and yielded substantial revenues; in addition, he inherited large quantities of gold, gems and jewels that constituted the personal wealth of the Asaf Jah family. The unknown reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle* who had the rare privilege of seeing the Asaf Jah jewels in 1891, had been awestruck and wrote: "In the city is the main palace of the Nizam, where, closely guarded, he keeps his jewels. Extraordinary treasures they are. There are thousands of emeralds, pearls and precious stones of almost every kind. It seems as if the wealth of King Solomon's mines were before us. I saw them all. They make, perhaps, the greatest collection of jewels in the world, worth £6,000,000."[33]

In the early years of his reign, Osman maintained the lavish lifestyle and the appurtenances of pomp that were intrinsic to his royal status. Karaka bestowed the title 'Fabulous Mogul' on him. He was indeed the last symbol of the glory of the Mughal empire. Even those used to luxury, such as Maharani Brinda of Kapurthala, who accompanied her husband to Hyderabad in 1916, were "staggered at the scale"[34] on which the Nizam lived. Captivated by the beauty and spirit of the maharani, the young Osman Ali Khan gifted "a magnificent necklace of diamonds, emeralds, and pearls" and to each of the royal men-folk, "a set of diamond buttons and a beautiful gold watch."[35] That the necklace evoked the awe and admiration of one to whom fabulous jewels were not a novelty is itself an indication of the magnificence of the ornament.

In the last and most splendid *durbar* held by the British in 1911 – to give the vassals of the Raj an opportunity to greet and pay obeisance to their King-Emperor George V and Queen Mary – the Nizam of Hyderabad as the foremost prince of India took precedence over all the other princes. Having just ascended the royal seat (*gaddi*) of Hyderabad after his father's untimely demise, Osman Ali Khan presented the queen with "a ruby necklace in which each ruby was as big as a pigeon's egg."[36]

Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan is dressed in traditional Hyderabadi clothes. Although averse to wearing jewels, he can be clearly seen with the delicate three-strand necklace strung with pearls and diamonds, *Kanthi Dholna Almas Wa Mothi* (NJ 95.108).

The opulent interior of King Kothi bears testimony to the colossal wealth of the last Nizam, Mir Osman Ali Khan.

In course of time, however, Osman Ali Khan emerged as an individual who was a complete contrast to his father Mahboob and the antithesis of India's ruling princes. The good-looking Osman Ali Khan, in the early years of his reign, did wear jewels and dressed well in coats embroidered with gems – "one was of pearls, another of emeralds, a third of diamonds and the fourth of rubies."[37] Beneath the veneer of ostentation, however, was a parsimonious individual, for even in those early days, "at a time when he had an estimated £100 million in gold bullion and silver, and £400 million in jewels," many of his suits "came from Burtons, the Fifty Shilling Tailors."[38] In his later years his sole items of jewellery were two simple rings that he always wore on his right hand – one set with a ruby on his ring finger and another set with a turquoise on his little finger. As he got older and more emaciated, the rings got loose. He would wrap string around them to tighten them.[39]

During the reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan, the Asaf Jah jewels were sometimes worn, but never shown. The singular known exception was in 1950, when Dinshah J Gazdar, proprietor of the reputed Bombay-based jewellery firm of Gazdar Ltd, was invited by Osman Ali Khan to Hyderabad to evaluate the Asaf Jah jewels. This exercise was most likely undertaken as part of his effort to apportion his colossal wealth among the various members of his vast family and to allocate jewels to the various trusts that he was in the process of constituting.

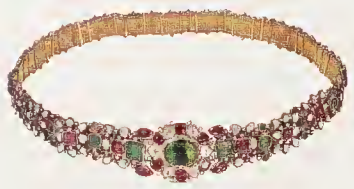
Gazdar arrived in Hyderabad on January 11, 1950 and stayed a few days, during which time he inspected and valued the jewels in King Kothi as well as the Nizam's huge art collection comprising gem-set and enamelled cups, plates, teapots, rosewater sprinklers, trays, bowls, betel-nut boxes and other articles. There were also carved and inlaid jades and crystals. Gazdar also saw the Jacob diamond and the 22 unset emeralds which, to the delight of Osman, he valued at Rs 5,500,000 against Osman's estimate of Rs 500,000. To Gazdar, the emeralds were truly magnificent and he wrote in his report that "their colour is deep green" and "their lustre perfect."[40] In the list of outstanding emeralds, Gazdar included five rings,[41] "each with a square-cut, 25-carat, flawless stone and a set of armlets,[42] the centre emerald of which weighed 100 carats."[43] Although the exercise was undertaken to estimate their value, the romance that Gazdar wove around the jewels in his report delighted Osman. One year later, the division of the heritage was completed. In March 1951, H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust and in February 1952, H.E.H. The Nizam's Supplemental Jewellery Trust came into existence.

Having apportioned his once legendary wealth into trusts, he issued a self-congratulatory *firman* in the *Shiraz* weekly of November 19, 1956. It said that "the beneficiaries would realize this with gratitude (though not today) when I shall be in the other world and shall have left behind an achievement, which will be unforgettable." Thereafter, he resigned from his position as Raj Pramukh and retreated into the deep recesses of King Kothi, where he devoted his time to arranging marriages for all his progeny. The material possession of gems and jewels were the only tangible proof of his ancestry and claim to the Hyderabad *masnad*, and he was reluctant to let go. He spent long hours admiring the Asaf Jah treasury of gems and jewels that still remained with him. However, towards the end of his life, the eccentric Osman Ali Khan insisted on living on less than "7s 6d a week and said he could not make ends meet. He was knitting his own socks, sleeping on a humble charpoy, living on rice and lentils, bargaining with stallholders over the price of a soft drink, rationing biscuits to one each at tea, and smoking cheap local Char Minar cigarettes...A steady companion was a pet white goat chewing on a turnip."[44]

The eccentric and reclusive Osman Ali Khan (*above*) devoid of all vestiges of the legendary Asaf Jah wealth, carrying a *khanazad* (adopted child). Jewels (*top*) assigned to the Supplemental Jewellery Trust, laid out in trays in King Kothi Palace, prior to being locked in the bank vaults.

The jewels assigned to the various trusts by no means constituted the entire holdings of the Nizams. After generous gifts of gems and jewels had been set aside for various family members, there was more than enough left to support the court. Hyderabadis recount how even in the

*Tora Paon Jaravi Almas Yakhoot Zamarrud* NJ 95.94/1-2



*Baglus Jaravi Zamarrud Wa Larli* NJ 95.79

1960s Osman's word was law amongst the members of his family. He would arrange weddings for his young granddaughters and grandsons and deck them with jewels, only to take back and lock everything away once the ceremony was over.

On February 24, 1967, Osman Ali Khan, the seventh and last Asaf Jah, was laid to rest. The abolition of titles and privy purses ended even the lingering vestiges of dynastic pretensions in India. Thereafter, the title and saga of the Asaf Jah jewels passed into history. He died secure in the knowledge that he had safeguarded enough wealth, if prudently used, to take care of the needs of another seven generations.

The contents of the Hyderabad treasury are shrouded in even greater secrecy after Osman's death. In 1954, he designated his grandson Mir Barkat Ali Khan, Prince Mukarram Jah, as his successor. It is said that when Mukarram Jah opened the treasury at King Kothi after Osman's death, the sight of caskets of diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls and vast quantities of jewellery that assaulted his eyes changed him forever! Countless stories prevail of how steel boxes filled with gold and jewellery were surreptitiously removed from King Kothi.

Osman Ali Khan with his two eldest sons photographed on his coronation day. His *dastar* is adorned with traditional Mughal-style turban jewels, including *Sarpech Murassa* (NJ 95.75/1).

## The Crown Jewels

The jewels of the Nizams were acquired by the Government of India from the two trusts. The collection comprising gem-set and enamelled turban ornaments, earrings, necklaces and pendants, nose rings, armbands, belts, anklets and watch chains dates from the early 18th century to the early 20th century. Golconda diamonds, Colombian emeralds, Burmese rubies and spinels, and pearls from Basra and India predominate. All the jewels are ostentatious and flamboyant, yet amidst the dazzle of precious gems, individual pieces stand out by virtue of their antiquity and the merit of their craftsmanship.

Sources for the study of the Asaf Jah jewels are practically non-existent; ascertaining their provenance is almost impossible. The Nizams lived cloistered within their large domain and their court was veiled in complete secrecy. Reticent and conservative, they permitted few outsiders access to their household. Seclusion from public view (*purdah*) was strictly observed and the women's quarters (*zenana*) was out of bounds to all except the closest. Even though inter-marriage between members of India's ruling families was customary, Hyderabad was an exception. The Nizams themselves never married out of the state and their daughters were usually married to men of the noble Paigah family.

Some scholars are of the opinion that the Nizam's jewels were accumulated from the scattered fortunes of the

Mughals and the kingdoms of Vijayanagar, Bijapur, Golconda, Ahmednagar, Bidar and Khandesh. *The Chronology of Modern Hyderabad* abounds in references to jewels received and given by the Nizam. Without exception, these references are restricted to ornament types and frustratingly devoid of details. In a single rare instance, the value of a jewel is mentioned. On January 29, 1849, the Nizam bestowed on Raja Shambu Pershad, "a pearl necklace, with emerald pendant valued at Rs 15,000."[45]

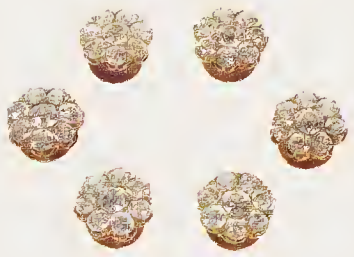
Diaries and travelogues of visitors to the Deccan like Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, Francois Bernier and De Thevenot provide clues to the wealth of the region, the production of the diamond mines and the treasury of the Mughals. But these pre-date Asaf Jah rule. From the late 18th century, British Residents at Hyderabad maintained detailed reports of their dealings with the Nizams and reminiscences of their tenure in the Asaf Jah court. Sadly, most of these deal primarily with political matters.

Mahboob, 'the Beloved', with his favourite daughters including Sahebzadi Nizam-un-nissa Begum. The children as well as the baby in his arms are dressed in beautifully brocaded traditional Hyderabadi clothes and are all decked in vast quantities of jewels. They are wearing innumerable pearl necklaces similar to the *Kanthi Marvareed Wa Almas Wa Goshwara-i-Zamarrud Mai Padak Yakhoot* (NJ 95.70).

Miniature paintings of the early Asaf Jah Nizams only provide nebulous clues. Depictions of jewellery are in the typical Mughal idiom and are quite standardized with scant regard for details. The collection has a fair representation of such ornaments as turban jewels like *sarpech*, *jigha* and *kalgi* (NJ 95.75/1 and NJ 95.72/7), necklaces of rows of pearls interspersed with emerald and spinel beads and gem-set pendants (NJ 95.124), armbands in the quintessential north Indian idiom (NJ 95.39/1-2), belts with buckles (NJ 95.41) – all ornament types that have an unbroken continuity to the present.

From the late 19th century, when photography came to India, the picture becomes less ambiguous. Lala Deen Dayal, official photographer to Mahboob Ali Pasha, took pictures that provide the only extant visual documentation of the jewels. With rare exceptions, even photo–portraits of Mahboob Ali Pasha and Osman Ali Khan depict the richest men in the world devoid of flamboyant jewellery. A simple watch chain, coat buttons and a few rings are all that are evident. Photographs of ladies are obviously absent since rules of *purdah* were strictly adhered to. A set of rare black and white photographs taken at King Kothi on March 29, 1951, the very day that the principal jewellery trust was established, provide a tantalising glimpse of all the jewels (page 30). The whereabouts of so many of them can only be speculated upon – they are most likely to have been sold.

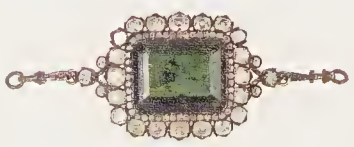
*Baglus Wa Kanval Almas Wa Yakhoot* NJ 95.22



*Gundiyan Almas Kanval* NJ 95.47/1-6

*Zanjeer Almas* NJ 95.162

*Bazuband Marvareed* NJ 95.114/1-2



*Taveez Dand Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas* NJ 95.36/1-2

It was hoped that the trust deeds would provide some clues to the origin, antiquity and importance of the jewels, especially since those assigned to H.E.H The Nizam's Jewellery Trust were clearly demarcated into groups. However, the entire set of jewels listed in the Fourth Schedule as ceremonial regalia (dynastic jewels) of the Asaf Jahs are no longer available for study. While the trust specifically prohibits the sale of the items in the Fifth Schedule, except in a dire emergency, these jewels are a mixed collection in terms of age, value, and workmanship. Several of the items are devoid of any historic or qualitative importance. They might have been included in the trust merely for their sentimental worth.

Scholarship on jewellery manufacture in Hyderabad under the Nizams is completely lacking and even less is known about the period prior to their occupation of the Deccan. However, juxtaposed between the Mughal north and the Hindu south, the Deccan under the Adil Shahi and Qutb Shahi dynasties had a rich history of artistic achievement. After the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda by Aurangzeb in 1686 and 1687 respectively, the *Ma'asir-i 'Alamgiri* states "..it would require another volume to describe in detail the coming of the Haidarabadis to the imperial Court .... and the admission into the imperial service of professional men, men of skill, and artisans of every kind."[46] What is unquestionable is that after the 17th century the Mughal aesthetic influence was all pervading and "Deccani artists and craftsmen borrowed motifs, forms and designs to an extent that their own distinctive identity barely survived."[47] Although, outside the confines of the court a vibrant tradition flourished, preserved in the ornament forms of the peasants and native inhabitants.[48]

The Nizams were foreigners in south India – circumstances brought them to a region that they eventually made their home. But for the almost 225 years that they dominated the politics of the Deccan, their court, their lifestyle and their culture were modelled on the Mughal court in Delhi, distinctly different from the indigenous milieu. Nevertheless, traces of local influences can be seen in several items including the buckle (NJ 95.22) set with Burmese cabochon rubies and diamonds in a style reminiscent of hair jewels of south India. Similarly, the diamond flower-head buttons (NJ 95.47/1-6 and NJ 95.7/1-12) are in the quintessential form of ear ornaments of the region.

The fusion of north and south is evident in the long diamond and emerald necklaces with pendants (NJ 95.78 and NJ 95.110). These are in the classical south Indian style combining indigenous forms and motifs with gems set in silver and enamelling on the reverse. Judging by photographs of nobles of the Nizam's court, these kinds of necklaces were mandatory Hyderabadi ornaments. Such jewels were no doubt gifted by the Nizams to those whom they wished to honour.

Bearing in mind the history of the Asaf Jah rulers, the earliest items in the collection probably entered the Hyderabad treasury at the time of the annexation of the Deccan. The elegant double-strand chain necklaces set with diamonds on both sides (NJ 95.162 and NJ 95.133), date to the late 17th or early 18th century and are

distinctly Adil Shahi jewel types.[49] In addition, it has already been established that gifts of jewels were received from the Mughal emperors as well as from vassals in various parts of the empire. The superbly crafted flower-blossom armbands (NJ 95.114/1-2) exhibit the delicate refinement of the imperial Mughal atelier. The pair of incomparable armbands (NJ 95.36/1-2), each with a magnificent rectangular table-cut emerald surrounded with diamonds, is believed to have once belonged to Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, and received by Nizam Ali Khan as part of the Tipu booty.

The vast majority of the pieces manifest the continuity of the technical virtuosity of Deccani craftsmanship and the aesthetic refinement of the Mughal legacy. Crafted from gold and silver in a plethora of designs and forms that combine intricacy, delicacy and splendour, they display the entire range of design within the reach of art. This artistic genius reached its apex during the Mughal period and has endured till this day.

The Mughals had established an empire in India that was politically and artistically pre-eminent from the 16th to the 18th century. Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan were committed aesthetes who raised the arts of India to unrivalled splendour. Architectural surfaces, manuscript pages, textiles, carpets, utilitarian objects such as plates, cups, jugs and weapons, and above all jewellery reflected Mughal aesthetics and flamboyance. Mughal jewellery – a unique combination of gems, precious metals and enamel pigments – became a quintessential symbol of the Mughal vision of the paradise garden. Gems were set in an age-old Indian technique whereby narrow ribbons of pure gold (*kundan*) were compressed in layers to form a solid wedge around the stone. The gem was thus held in place through pressure alone. The jewel was enamelled on the reverse in the *champleve* technique by applying finely powdered enamel colours (*mina*) in layers into engraved grooves. Each layer of colour was fused in a pre-heated kiln to achieve an even, translucent finish. The technique of enamelling (*minakari*) was particularly suited to the representation of floral motifs; flowering plants, flower blossoms, leaves and scrolling vines were adapted and rendered in exquisite detail on a wide range of ornament forms.

Mir Osman Ali Khan, at his wedding in April 1906. He is wearing the magnificent Asaf Jah ceremonial jewels, including turban ornaments, armbands and the long Deccani necklace, set with diamonds and emeralds, *Har Murassa* (NJ 95.78).

In the migratory movement of craftsmen after the demise of the Mughal empire in the early 18th century, artists carried their technology and skills across geographical boundaries. In this flux, designs and forms of Mughal origin find an echo across the length and breadth of India – particularly in the provincial courts of Jaipur, Murshidabad, Lucknow and Hyderabad. Since every royal atelier developed the skills and produced fabulous jewels for the ruler of the day, it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish between places of manufacture. Designs were similar, the best stones were

# STYLES OF ENAMELLING

*Kanthi Marvareed*
NJ 95.148

*Bazuband Marvareed* NJ 95.114/1-2

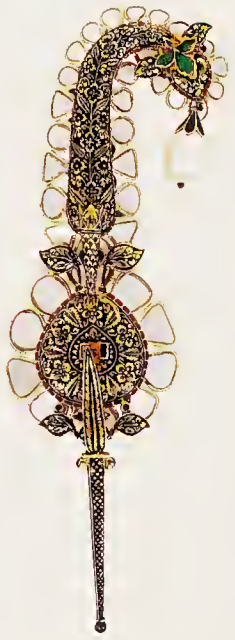
*Bazuband Almas Parab* NJ 95.83/1-2

*Kanthi Marvareed*
NJ 95.124

*Taveez Zamarrud Dand*
NJ 95.134

*Padak Almas Kanval* NJ 95.71

*Taveez Zamarrud Dand Ka*
NJ 95.164



*Kalgi Almas Parab* NJ 95.82/2

*Sarpatti Almas Parab* NJ 95.81/2

*Saath Larh Marvareed Kalan Almas Samosa Parab* NJ 95.1

*Jugni Marvareed* NJ 95.123

*Dastband Murassa* NJ 95.77

*Sarpatti Almas Parab* NJ 95.81/1

*Dastband Almas* NJ 95.74/1-2

used and techniques and craftsmanship skills travelled between courts. In the absence of definite provenance, it is very difficult to accurately say if, for example, the enamelled and gem-set armbands (NJ 95.39/1-2) were made in Rajasthan, Lucknow or Hyderabad. Precise attribution is not possible even in pieces of later manufacture, such as the magnificent diamond necklace (NJ 95.106) and watch chain (NJ 95.61). These might have been made in Calcutta, Delhi or Bombay. In all these cities, jewellers workshops were catering to Indian royalty.

Although schools of enamelling emerged and each region developed its own motifs and unique signature colours (such as the vibrant blue and green enamel of Lucknow), the ubiquitous palette of red and green on a white ground endured everywhere throughout the 18th century. In Hyderabad, jewels continued to be made combining *kundan*-set gems with enamelling on the reverse. However, little study has been done on Hyderabad enamelling even though the finest work was produced there.[50] Nevertheless, based on pieces attributed to Deccani manufacture, characteristic features of Deccani jewels include elegant forms and delicate detailing on the gold; the enamelled surface is rarely over crowded and the emphasis is on flower studies and details. The palette is vibrant, the colours are darker and more robust distinguished by vibrant greens, deep reds and dark blue, with delicate touches of white. Monochrome green, black and white enamel work is frequently encountered. The enamelling and workmanship manifest in the elegant diamond and enamel pendants (NJ 95.123 and NJ 95.147), the glowing colour palette of the pendant (NJ 95.148) and the exquisite black and white enamel of the turban ornaments (NJ 95.82/1 and NJ 95.81/1) are all hallmarks of Deccani workmanship.

On the enamelled jewels in the collection, Dinshah Gazdar wrote in his 1950 report: "I have never set eyes on such jewels before. Each piece is beautifully enamelled on the back in colours obtainable only after pounding precious stones. To-day if I were asked to produce even a small replica of one of these I would be unable to do so, for these are unique specimens of a lost art. The eastern jewellery collection of His Exalted Highness is one of the finest in the world, and lodged as it is in its ancestral home, it reflects the splendour of the great Asaf Jah dynasty."[51] The report does not specify which items in particular he was referring to, but judging by the enamelled items that are presently in the collection, the comment must have been made in reference to those mentioned above and that date to the 18th century.

The plurality of the Deccan – juxtaposed between the Mughal north and the Hindu south, together with a revival of royal patronage under the Nizams – drew craftsmen to Hyderabad from Delhi, Lahore, Haryana[52], Gujarat, Rajasthan and Lucknow. Innovations in style and technique came from these immigrants. By amalgamating, absorbing and indigenizing the many influences, they crafted ornaments that were unique. The synthesis between Mughal and Deccani sensibility gave rise to a new, distinctively Deccani idiom. But too little is known of jewellery manufacture under the Asaf Jah Nizams to permit the construction of a chronology of styles.

The ascendancy of the British in the 19th century resulted in the infusion of English manners, customs and European fashions into India. Princely taste in this period shows a marked Europeanization that is reflected in ornament types, designs and techniques of production. Taking advantage of this interest, European jewellery firms established businesses in Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras to cater initially to European residents and inevitably to a local populace who

A youthful Osman Ali Khan photographed in 1914, wearing the star and crescent brooch and the magnificent diamond necklace, *Kanthi Almas Kanval* (NJ 95.106).

increasingly sought British goods. In course of time, many of them became the preferred jewellers of Indian royalty and the Nizam of Hyderabad was no exception.

Prominent among these firms were Hamilton & Co,[53] Marcks & Co Ltd, Lund, Blockley & Carter, Treacher & Co Ltd, Cooke & Kelvey[54], and P Orr & Sons. They had large workshops with craftsmen from England and skilled Indian workmen. Of all the firms mentioned, only P Orr & Sons is significantly represented in the collection. Six rings inscribed on the inside with the name of the firm were without any doubt made for Mahboob Ali Pasha in the 1880s. They include the magnificent and rare alexandrite ring (NJ 95.65) and three rings set with diamonds (NJ 95.25, NJ 95.24 & NJ 95.104/4). Two more rings in the collection, made by the same firm, are set with turquoise and diamonds (NJ 95.163/1-11 & NJ 95.140/1-11).

Quite a few items appear to date to the reign of the sixth Nizam. Watch chains, buttons and cufflinks, integral to the Western suits favoured by him, entered the Asaf Jah collection in this period. Lacy necklaces set with diamonds (NJ 95.80), and necklaces with diamonds and button pearls claw-set in light mounts with European clasps (NJ 95.67) exhibit a distinctly Western design idiom. In the absence of any maker's marks, it is very difficult to ascertain the provenance of these jewels. However, judging by design and workmanship, they could have been made by any of the foreign firms executing special commissions for the maharajas of India.

Indian jewellers, determined to retain the custom of their wealthy clients, were quick to adapt to the changing tastes. They produced traditional Indian jewels – mostly turban ornaments and necklaces – based on wholly Western designs incorporating lighter mounts, claw setting and faceted gems. A wide range of these jewellery types is represented, but the most spectacular pieces are the turban ornaments and necklaces – rendered in a more modern style, the gems set in open-backed, claw settings (*a jour*) and the reverse devoid of any enamelling. The spinel turban ornament (NJ 95.42) is a typical example of this innovation. Furthermore, the vertical spray is set in a spring (*en tremblant*) – a relatively modern device.

To enhance the brilliance of flat table-cut stones (formerly done by the use of foils), Indian craftsmen devised new frameworks, as seen in the necklace with large flat diamonds (NJ 95.31). The splendid emerald and diamond turban jewels (NJ 95.60 & NJ 95.37), the *sarpech* intended for a child (NJ 95.12), the necklaces set with diamonds, pearls and emerald drops (NJ 95.70 and NJ 95.80), all exhibit the cross-fertilization of European and Indian influences. Jewellers and dealers from all over India visited Hyderabad and offered items for sale. Notable among the Indian jewellers who are believed to have done business with the Nizam are T R Tawker & Sons, established in 1761 in Madras, and Babu Pannalal from Bombay.[55]

It was customary for these jewellers to travel with finished items or with designs and gems for special orders. With their well-known passion for gems, both Mahboob Ali Pasha and Osman Ali Khan commissioned innumerable items of jewellery, drawing upon the vast collection of diamonds, emeralds, spinels and pearls

in the Hyderabad treasury. Every special event – a coronation, birthday, marriage, the birth of a child, a commemorative *durbar*, the visit of a foreign dignitary, or even just a whim – warranted a new ornament. It was perfectly in order for the Nizam to sit with the jeweller, discuss the commission, view the designs and select the stones.

From the composition of the collection it is apparent that most of the items were intended for use by the Asaf Jah men. This is corroborated by the fact that there are no fewer than 21 turban ornaments, 9 watch chains, 11 sets of cufflinks and buttons, and 16 belts and buckles in addition to magnificent necklaces and armbands. These jewels were part of the personal regalia of the Nizams of Hyderabad and perhaps once formed the core of the dynastic jewels of the Asaf Jahs. Feminine ornaments such as earrings, collar-type necklaces, toe-rings and anklets formed part of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, wars and political vicissitudes tossed many magnificent gems onto the international market. When the royal houses of France and Russia ceased to be the biggest buyers of important gems, European dealers turned to India with eager anticipation. The maharajas, with large disposable wealth and an insatiable passion for dazzling jewels, were their premier clients. In the 1870s, important gems from the collection of the exiled Empress Eugenie of France were purchased by the Maharaja of Patiala and the Gaekwad of Baroda. In the 1910s and 1920s, priceless treasures of the Ottoman Sultans and Russian aristocracy were offered for sale through Cartier, Mauboussin and other European establishments. It was at this time that the princes of India opened the doors of their palaces to jewellery salesmen.

The most notorious of these dealers was Alexander Malcolm Jacob, who sold the 'Imperial' diamond to Mahboob Ali Pasha. While the diamond was Jacob's last sale to the Nizam, it was by no means the first. Having won the trust and confidence of the Nizam, he had supplied other jewels and gems over a period of time. Jewellers from all over the country travelled to Hyderabad in the hope of an opportunity to sell their offerings to the Nizam. Albert Abid, Mahboob Ali Pasha's trusted and personal valet, brokered many deals between visiting jewellers and the Nizam. The name of Babu Pannalal features in the proceedings of the 'Imperial Diamond Case'. He is believed to have sold a magnificent cat's eye (in all likelihood, the gem that is set in the ring NJ 95.27) to the Nizam. The 22 unset emeralds (NJ 95.32/1-22), reputed to have once belonged to Czar Nicholas of Russia, might also have been acquired by Mahboob Ali Pasha around this time although unconfirmed reports mention that they were acquired by Osman Ali Khan from a Persian dealer in Delhi, in 1911.

Bashir-un-nissa Begum, Osman's daughter, adorned with traditional Deccani jewellery, including necklaces of pearls, and diamond ear ornaments in the form of flowers, *Karan Phool Jaravi* (NJ 95.126/1-2).

A rose-blossom tiara and necklace set with diamonds purchased from Cartier by Mir Osman Ali Khan as wedding gifts for Princess Elizabeth of England in 1948.

In spite of their tremendous wealth, the Nizams never succumbed to the temptation of updating their vast array of jewels with the European jewellery houses of the day. While historic and impressive commissions were received by Cartier, Boucheron, Mauboussin, Van Cleef & Arpels, Chaumet and Harry Winston from the princes of Baroda, Kapurthala, Patiala, Gwalior, Jaipur and Nawanagar, the Nizam of Hyderabad is not mentioned at all. To firms like Cartier, the Nizam would have been a prized and profitable customer. When Cartier's *grand vendeur* M Prieur visited India in 1909, he was advised by gem merchants that the "Nizam of Hyderabad...is the richest; for this kind of customer one would need rather gaudy stones."[56] However, in view of the deteriorating financial condition of the state and the humiliation of the Jacob debacle, it is unlikely that either Mahboob Ali Pasha or Osman Ali Khan did any business with foreign gem dealers.

In view of his proclivity for secrecy it is impossible to ascertain if Osman added to the Asaf Jah jewels in his lifetime. Citing a single sale, Nadelhoffer mentions that Jacques Cartier, on his first trip to India in 1911, sold the Nizam of Hyderabad a solitary gold watch.[57] Correspondence with the firm revealed that the Cartier archives record only one purchase made by the Nizam of Hyderabad. In 1947, Mir Osman Ali Khan selected a rose-blossom tiara and a diamond necklace as wedding gifts for Princess Elizabeth.[58] Considering that the British government of India was maintaining strict vigilance on expenditures by the princes and that major expenses charged to the state treasury required the sanction of the government, it is unlikely that Osman made any significant purchases. Descendants of jewellers in Hyderabad today recount stories of Mahboob's patronage but few speak of Osman having commissioned any substantial jewels.

However, in numerous old family photographs, the presence of an unassuming old man, identified as the jeweller Murarilal Totaram, is conspicuous. Pictures dating to the 1930s and 1940s, feature a distinguished looking man, identified by those who were once in the inner circle of the palace as Zain-ul Ali Raza, an Arab pearl merchant from Bombay. Both these men, along with other reputed jewel merchants, did extensive business with the Nizam. Whether these dealings involved Osman buying gems or selling gems is a matter of speculation. Middlemen such as these must have facilitated the liquidation of the vast quantities of loose gems that Osman had inherited from his forebears.

After Independence the maharajas turned sellers as princely India succumbed to the lure of the European firms mentioned earlier, who now came in pursuit of the fabulous gems reposing in vaults and treasuries. However, even prior to 1948, princely collections were gradually being liquidated. According to Nadelhoffer, "In 1912 and 1913, the Nizam of Hyderabad had both gemstones and antique weapons auctioned while the Gaekwad of Baroda disposed of pearls and jewels."[59] Nadelhoffer also mentions that in 1931, the London branch of Cartier acquired a most remarkable olive-green diamond originally weighing 17.50, carats purported to have come from the collection of the Nizam of Hyderabad. After recutting, the gem was incorporated into the famous Nawanagar necklace of coloured diamonds.[60]

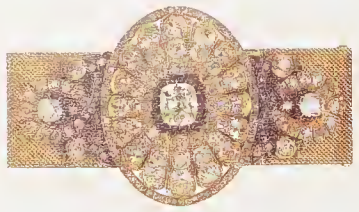
After 1948, gems from the Nizam's collection were circumspectly sold in India and Europe, "for the Italian firm of Bulgari was setting rubies, pearls, and carved emeralds from it in the early 1970s."[61] International gem dealers and jewellers from Delhi and Bombay were received at King Kothi. After Osman Ali Khan's death, the depletion was complete – jewels that can almost without any doubt be attributed to the Nizam's collection even today appear at auctions held by Christie's and Sotheby's.

During the post-sale documentation, two practically identical sets of jewels comprising earrings, necklaces, bangles, anklets, toe-rings and nose-rings, were found packed in cardboard boxes, each inscribed with the name Ekbal Begum and Gowhar Begum[62] – Osman Ali Khan's third and fourth wife respectively. According to one source, "the Nizam kept jewellery in hundreds of boxes...In later years of life....he had each box of jewellery assigned to each of his sons and daughters, but these boxes were meant to be delivered to the assignee only after his death. So, none knew exactly the contents of these boxes except that it was noted down by the Nizam in his own private book kept for the purpose."

In the final analysis, what emerges is that the jewels are a hybrid of Mughal, Deccani and European influences, reflecting the ethos of a dynasty that originated in the Mughal court, ruled the Deccan and was a staunch ally of the British empire.

## The Gems

Modern approaches to the study of Indian jewellery attach greater importance to the form of the jewel and the likely date of its manufacture than the gems set into them. However, this line of enquiry has its limitations, since in every period ornaments were taken apart, the gold melted and stones recycled into new settings in accordance with changing styles. Change of use is obvious in the pair of emerald cufflinks and button (NJ 95.137/1-3), the pierced gems indicating that they had earlier been used differently; similarly, the carved emerald set in a ring (NJ 95.119) was formerly used as the centre-piece of an armband or pendant. Therefore, it has to be acknowledged that, to the maker and the wearer, settings themselves were of little importance, acting merely as a temporary receptacle for the gems. This attitude also perhaps explains the juxtaposition of silver with fine gems and outstanding enamel work – as seen in the pair of exquisite armbands (NJ 95.83/1-2). There are even instances where the quality of the enamel work bears little co-relation to the fine gems used on the other side – particularly noticeable in the pair of diamond armbands (NJ 95.59/1-2). In this context, it is obvious that many of the jewels – such as some of the impressive necklaces,



*Baglus Kanval Almas Wa Patta Tilai* NJ 95.4

*Lu Lu Almas Kanval* NJ 95.101/1-2

buckles and turban ornaments, as well as the watch chains, cufflinks and buttons that date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries – were obviously made drawing upon the vast contents of the treasury.

As already emphasized, the present collection is only a small fraction of the legendary wealth of the Nizams. Yet it is breathtaking when translated into gem weights. There are over 25,000 diamonds weighing in excess of 12,000 carats, more than 2,000 emeralds weighing over 10,000 carats and pearls exceeding 40,000 *chows*. These gems have been associated with the Asaf Jah dynasty from the early 18th century, but their history and antiquity go further back in time – to the diamond mines of Golconda, the emerald mines of Colombia, the ruby and spinel mines of Mogok in Burma and the pearl fisheries of the Gulf of Mannar and Persia. These gems have travelled the trade routes to the prosperous bazaars of Golconda Fort, Masulipatam, Goa and Surat.

In 1763, Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II, shifted his capital from Aurangabad to Hyderabad, situated east of the fort of Golconda across the river Musi. Hyderabad and the fort were strategically located on the trade route that linked the ports of the kingdom, Masulipatam and Srikakulam on the east coast, with Goa and Surat on the west coast. In the period of vibrant 16th and 17th century commerce, endless caravans and merchants passed through Hyderabad, and diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls together with silks and cottons were traded in Caravani-i-Sahu – the flourishing bazaar in the vicinity of Golconda Fort. The area is called Karwan today and has traditionally been home to jewellers and money-lenders.

Dry and rocky though the Deccan was, the region was the repository of all the mineral wealth of ancient India and at one time, the sole supplier of diamonds to the world. Golconda, the area bounded on the north and south by the Godavari and Penner rivers, was one of the most diamantiferous regions in the world. No fewer than 23 diamond mines were located here.[63] The majestic fort where these stones were traded was also known as Golconda. The gems too were called by this name: in the diamond trade, the term 'Golconda' is employed to classify those stones that are exceptionally transparent and brilliant.

Throughout the history of the Golconda mines, the rulers of the region retained the best and largest gems for themselves and prohibited the export of stones beyond a certain weight. Even though it is commonly believed that the mines were considerably depleted by the 17th century, geologists who visited Golconda during the reigns of the Asaf Jahs have left detailed reports on the workings of the mines.[64] These accounts testify that several mines were still productive well into the 19th century, albeit not as prolific as they were in the past. Although no spectacular new finds were reported during Asaf Jah rule, Hyderabad state was ensured of a steady supply of good sized and fine quality gems.

The only extraordinary stone to appear during Asaf Jah rule was a huge diamond of the finest water, weighing about 375 carats, and known originally as

Bala (little) Koh-i-Nur, and later renamed the 'Nizam'.[65] According to accounts, the stone was found buried in an earthen pot by a goldsmith – it had obviously been stolen and hidden by someone. At some point the stone was fractured and the largest piece was acquired by the *diwan* Chandu Lal for the Nizam Nasir-ud- Daula in about 1835. It was deposited in the Asaf Jah treasury, where it remained, except for a short period when it was mortgaged to meet the fiscal liabilities of the state.[66] The stone, which is believed to have been of superb colour and clarity, was never cut and polished. A glass model was made, perhaps to keep a record of the stone, when it was mortgaged. In December 1891, the gem was last seen by the *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter who requested Mahboob Ali Pasha to show him the stone. He reports that the Nizam "took it from its place in an ordinary green case. He carefully opened the box, slowly unwound a dirty-little cloth and placed in my hand a great crystal-like slug as big as a champagne glass, and worth just £800,000. It was the Nizam diamond."[67]

The whereabouts of the Nizam diamond remain unknown. It does not figure in any of the jewellery trusts, although it is believed to have still been in the possession of Osman Ali Khan in the 1950s, and was last seen by his daughter, Shahzadi Pasha Begum, only three days before he died. Jewellers in Bombay whisper that the diamond was sold for the princely sum of Rs 10 crore (Rs 100,000,000) and that the glass replica is still with the jeweller who handled the sale!

The diamonds in the jewels are all old-cut or Mughal-cut stones. Of the various forms and cuts of Mughal-style diamonds, the *parab* (straight flat) and *kanval* or *mukhlasi* (faceted flat) are the most common. Precious gems in ancient India were rarely cut and faceted, as they are today. Indian lapidarists aimed to retain maximum weight with minimal loss.

Part of the loss in gem size can be attributed to mining methods. Miners traditionally used heavy crowbars to extract the rocks, resulting in fractures to the diamonds, producing large quantities of thin stones. Craftsmen ensured that not even the smallest sliver was wasted. They devised designs and techniques to use these tiny diamonds that resulted from the method of mining employed. Well-versed in the technique of cutting stones, the craftsmen skilfully camouflaged flaws by covering the whole surface with facets (bracelets – NJ 95.84/1-2), enhanced the brilliance of mere slivers by simply faceting them around the edges (buttons – NJ 95.139/1-3), inserted foil beneath the stones (necklace – NJ 95.93) and devised mounts to simulate a faceted effect (necklace – NJ 95.31). The Asaf Jah collection contains representative examples of a wide variety of diamond shapes, cuts and even colours. The rare golden tint of the diamonds in

Having ascended the royal seat when he was a mere child, a pensive nine-year-old Mahboob sits for a portrait formally dressed in regal attire, October 1875.

*Saheli Moti Panch Larhi Wa Saath Tukdi Yakhoot Wa Almas* NJ 95.38

*Lu Lu Kanval Almas Wa Marvareed* NJ 95.100/1-2

the belt (NJ 95.33) and necklace (NJ 95.67), arranged to show fine gradation of colour, and the exceptional briolette diamond and faceted beads in the same necklace, make these truly exceptional and incomparable jewels.

After diamonds, the collection abounds in emeralds. The Mughal emperors had an infinite passion for emeralds – a passion that was acquired by the maharajas of India. From the 1580s, when the Muzo and Chivor mines of Colombia were discovered, emeralds poured into India through Goa and the Deccani ports. The gems were exported from South America to India by the Portuguese.

Table-cut, cabochon or beads, the emeralds in the collection are, without exception, magnificent and reveal that the Indian lapidarist was a master cutter of stones. Based on the thickness of the rough stone, he carefully faceted every gem to enhance colour and depth as can be seen in the magnificent emeralds set into the collar necklace (NJ 95.90).

Although inscribed and carved gems were especially coveted in the royal courts, the collection contains only two carved emeralds. One set into a ring (NJ 95.119) and the other in a belt buckle (NJ 95.99) – both dating to the 18th century. In turban ornaments, necklaces, belt buckles, rings, watch chains and armbands, emeralds have been liberally used. The most exceptional gems in the collection are the 22 unset emeralds (NJ 95.32/1-22) and the two rectangular table-cut emeralds, each weighing over 100 carats, set as armbands (NJ 95.36/1-2).

Rubies and spinels came to India from Burma's Mogok mines. The proximity of the region to south India and the availability of outstanding stones in the Deccani gem bazaars ensured that they were extensively used in south Indian jewellery. Although rubies and spinels are not used in large quantities in the collection, there are a few outstanding examples. The majestic ruby turban ornament (NJ 95.69) set with faceted and cabochon stones and briolette diamonds is both unusual and exceptional. The large rectangular table-cut spinel in a ring (NJ 95.120) similarly merits attention.

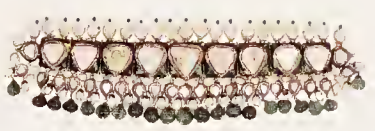
Few traditional jewels are made without pearls – they are either incorporated into the settings or hung along the edges. The quantity and quality of pearls in the jewels of the Nizams – spherical, pear-shaped, ovoid and baroque – is unparalleled. Almost without exception, they are of unrivalled beauty exhibiting fine lustre and beautiful colour; they are meticulously matched for quality and size. The seven-strand pearl necklace (NJ 95.1) is one of the most outstanding items in the collection.

Though land-bound, Hyderabad has earned itself the epithet 'City of Pearls'. Its fame as a pearl trading centre perhaps dates to the time of the region's links with the Arabian Gulf even before the Mughal conquest of the Deccan. Historically, the region was one of the most important centres of Arab trade in the Deccan and traders in Basra pearls flocked to the city. Also, the Gulf of Mannar, off the south-eastern coast of India, was the oldest pearl fishery in the country, productive right through the 19th century. From Mannar and Bahrein, pearls flooded the Indian market and found a home in the royal courts. In course of time, Hyderabad became a haven for

Sahebzadi Nizam-un-nissa Begum, eldest daughter and favourite child of Mahboob Ali Pasha, died when she was very young. Here she has been photographed dressed in beautifully-embroidered clothes with pearls cascading down her chest. The necklaces that are visible include *Chintak Parab Wa Marvareed* (NJ 95.92) and *Saath Larh Marvareed Kalan Almas Samosa Parab* (NJ 95.1).

craftsmen working with pearls. Even today, in Chandanpet, a small village a few kilometres outside the city, an entire population is engaged in the delicate art of drilling pearls.

Diamonds, emeralds and pearls, necklaces, turban ornaments and rings – the jewels all offer us a glimpse into the treasury of the most important native state in post-Mughal India. Even today, the magic of the past endures in the long corridors and high ceilings of Chow Mahalla, Purani Haveli, King Kothi and Falaknuma palaces. The Nizam's name still evokes reverence and servility. Feeble old guards jump to attention at the very mention of his name. To many in the palaces, time stands still – Osman is still 'Sarkar', the Sovereign, spoken of in the present tense. Eerily, any queries by visitors are deflected for fear of inviting the wrath of Sarkar. To a world grappling with the myriad problems of the 21st century – poverty, war, terrorism, economic imperialism, and religious fanaticism – the wealth of the Nizams offers a temporary escape into a gracious and opulent past.



# THE CATALOGUE

## The Imperial (Jacob) Diamond

An oval brilliant diamond
South Africa
Mined in the late 19th century
L: 39.5 mm W: 29.25 mm Depth: 22.5 mm
Weight: 37 gm; 184.50 carats
NJ 95.89

Edwin Streeter, the renowned jeweller to Queen Victoria, once stated that great gems belong to history. The birth of an exceptional stone is usually proclaimed to the world and thereafter chronicles are kept of its travels and adventures.[1] Many vanish from sight only to re-emerge after many years re-cut and no longer recognizable. It was in 1892 that the Imperial diamond was last seen. It only re-surfaced 80 years later in 1972; but this time it was called the 'Jacob' diamond.[2]

When precisely the diamond was christened the 'Jacob' (after Alexander Malcolm Jacob, who sold the stone to the Nizam) is not known. Until this documentation, even the origin and the real identity of the stone ('Victoria', 'Imperial' or 'Great White') have been shrouded in speculation. However, the original name by which the diamond was known when it first made its appearance has now been laid to rest. The events and the sensational case surrounding the sale of the diamond in 1891 was closely followed by newspapers in England and in India. The diamond that was the subject of contention was known as the 'Imperial' and the trial – 'The Imperial Diamond Case'.

Streeter does not mention the Victoria or even the Imperial in his notable work *The Great Diamonds of the World*. The two largest South African diamonds that he refers to are the Stewart that weighed 288.38 carats in the rough and the Porter-Rhodes weighing 150 carats. Ian Balfour, in his comprehensive work titled *Famous Diamonds*, states that the gem known as the Victoria, Imperial or Great White was discovered in South Africa, weighed 457.5 (old) carats in the rough and was the "biggest octahedral diamond from South Africa until 1896 when it was surpassed by one weighing 503.25 (old) carats that was found in the De Beers mine."[3]

The rough stone which was later cut into the Imperial diamond.

Contrary to reports that appeared in August 1884 in *The Times* in London attributing the stone to the Jagersfontein Mine in the Orange Free State, George F Kunz, the eminent gemmologist, discussed the origin and early history of the Victoria in the journal *Science* dated August 5, 1887. The shape, dimensions and weight of the Victoria as described by Kunz correspond exactly with that of the Imperial – thereby establishing that they were one and the same. According to Kunz, the diamond was discovered in June or July 1884 in the Kimberley mines and smuggled out by one of the officers, who sold it to "four illicit diamond-buyers." The rough gem eventually found its way to London, where it caused a "sensation in Hatton Garden, the great diamond market."[4] It was eventually purchased by a consortium of eight persons (perhaps

Splendid chandeliers adorn a drawing room in Chow Mahalla palace, where many a jewel might have been purchased.

Messrs Pittar Leverson & Co from whom Jacob bought the gem). The stone was sent to the firm of Jacques Metz in Amsterdam where it was cut by M B Barends. After cleaving off a small piece, it was ultimately shaped into a magnificent, oval brilliant with slightly rounded sides, cut with 58 facets and weighing 184.50 carats. Its final shape was not entirely symmetrical in order to preserve the large weight of the stone.[5] According to George F Kunz, the cutting commenced in the presence of the Queen of Holland on April 9, 1887 and took about a year to complete.

In 1891, when the Imperial was in the custody of the Calcutta High Court, Dr King of the Geological Survey of India was permitted to examine it. His scrutiny revealed some minute flakings on the girdle which, according to him, "are only what may be expected to appear on an acutely cut edge of many African diamonds" – attributable "to the fact of their being...original diamonds, that is, diamonds taken from the original matrix in which they were formed."[6] The present gem corresponds to the descriptions of Kunz and King. The colour, transparency, and facet surfaces above and below the girdle are without blemish. The gem combines carat, colour and clarity – the three cardinal C's of the diamond trade.

The newly-cut gem was placed on the market, its owners seeking to realize their investment of £45,000.[7] The price – £150,000! The potential buyer – the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad, Mahboob Ali Khan! The seller – Alexander Malcolm Jacob of Simla.

Alexander Malcolm Geary Subonjee alias Alexander Malcolm Jacob was born Jacob Barre in Italy and was a Roman Catholic. His early life was spent in Turkey, where his father started a business as a soap manufacturer. Jacob struck out on his own, sailed for India, was ship-wrecked off the Muscat coast and arrived in Bombay penniless. Contrary to the romantic stories fabricated about his journey south, he walked all the way to Hyderabad and was employed by a noble, Amil-ul-Kabir. He then moved to Calcutta where he worked for the jewellery firm, Charles Nephew & Co, (where he perhaps got his early training in precious gems). He subsequently served the Nawab of Rampur and the Maharaja of Dholpur. In 1877, he went to Simla where he set up a flourishing business in gems, jewellery and antiques.[8]

In November-December 1890, Jacob visited Hyderabad to sell some jewels to the Nizam. This was not Jacob's first visit, nor was it his first business transaction with the Nizam. Colonel Marshall, private secretary to Mahboob Ali Pasha, had introduced Jacob to him three or four years before the present meeting. Albert Abid, the Nizam's chamberlain, who usually brokered such meetings, was then away in Persia. Jacob glowingly described a diamond to the Nizam, praised its uniqueness and beauty and mentioned that the asking price was "one crore and twenty lakhs" (Rs 12,000,000). The Nizam evinced interest but no further discussions were held.

After Abid's return, Jacob visited Hyderabad in February 1891 and then again in March, on which occasion he showed the Nizam a model of the diamond and discussions about its price appear to have taken place in the presence of Abid. The Nizam had "never purchased or seen a diamond, of this size, before..."[9] Jacob now offered the gem for 50 lakhs (Rs 5,000,000) – reduced from the original asking price of one crore and 20 lakhs – and in view of the Nizam's reluctance to buy it, lowered the price still further to 46 lakhs (Rs 4,600,000). In the Nizam's own words, "I said I accept the price on the condition that the diamond should be brought here on approval or non-approval (*passand* or *na passand*)."[10]

Prior to leaving Hyderabad, Jacob requested an advance of Rs 50,000 towards expenses and to deposit with Kilburn & Co to initiate the process of getting the diamond. He also informed the Nizam that the gem was in England and the owners of the gem, Messrs Pittar Leverson & Co, diamond merchants of London, would only send it to their agents Kilburn & Co in Calcutta when half the money (Rs 23 lakhs – Rs 2,300,000) had been deposited in a bank, the balance to be paid after the Nizam approved of the diamond. The Nizam agreed to this arrangement but his understanding was that the money would remain untouched until the diamond was '*passand*' or '*na passand*', that is, approved or disapproved by him. "If it is approved, the other half would have to be paid. If the diamond is not approved, the diamond will be returned and my money will be returned."[11]

In Calcutta, Jacob deposited Rs 50,000 with Kilburn & Co, and an additional sum of £2,200 to the account of Pittar Leverson & Co to cover insurance and other risks. In June 1891, under instructions from Mahboob Ali Pasha, a loan of Rs 23 lakhs was raised against securities held by the Nizam's government in the Bank of Bengal, Calcutta. Upon receiving a telegram about the arrival of the diamond, the amount was placed at the disposal of his Prime Minister Sir Asman Jah and then transferred to the credit of Alexander Malcolm Jacob. The diamond arrived in Calcutta by mail on June 26. On July 10, Alexander Malcolm Jacob handed over Rs 2,200,000 to Messrs Kilburn & Co and received the diamond. According to his testimony, Jacob was given till July 31 to complete the sale, failing which the amount of £2,200 would be forfeited and the diamond would have to be returned to the owners in London. He also withdrew the balance Rs 100,000 from the Bank of Bengal and proceeded to Hyderabad with the stone, quite oblivious to events that had transpired there in the interim period.

News of the impending sale of the diamond had leaked to various jewellers, who – jealous of Jacob's proximity to the Nizam, his almost exclusive monopoly as a supplier of jewels, the huge commissions that Abid made on every transaction and aware of the vast profit that Jacob was set to make from the deal – offered to obtain the gem for the Nizam at a much lower price. Sir Denis Fitzpatrick, the British Resident, also heard of the transaction and was alarmed at the thought of such a huge sum of money being swept out of the state treasury at a time when it could be more judiciously expended in averting the threat of famine. In a meeting with the Nizam, he is believed to have politely requested him to resist the allure of the gem and recover his deposit.

Jacob arrived in Hyderabad carrying his precious gem, confident of completing the sale. Both he and Abid anticipated making a substantial amount of money. During a meeting in Bombay in January, Jacob had told Abid: "There is a good deal of butter

Chow Mahalla Palace, where negotiations were conducted between Mahboob and Jacob for the purchase of the diamond.

for our bread in it."[12] However, according to Abid, the stone was not the same as the model that Jacob had left with the Nizam. Any attempt to recover the model to facilitate an exchange with a new one was impossible. When Jacob showed the Imperial to the Nizam, he minutely examined the gem and since it differed so considerably in size from the model which His Highness had retained, he simply stated, "I won't take it."[13] The stone was '*na passand*' to him. Whether this disapproval was due to the caution advised by the Resident or he was influenced by the whispers that the stone could be had at a lower price is not clear. Perhaps not wishing to give the impression that he was taking orders from the British Resident, the Nizam seized upon the excuse that the stone was different from the original model. He demanded the return of his money.

Jacob tried every means to see the Nizam again to convince him to complete the transaction. Even Abid could not help him at this stage. Jacob left Hyderabad with the stone and on July 21 wired Messrs Kilburn & Co that the diamond was rejected, as there had been some foul play. They in turn wired Pittar Leverson & Co that the diamond was returned. In a subsequent telegram, Jacob appears to have tried to salvage his loss and recover some of the money he had paid the owners by saying that the Nizam had reduced the purchase price after seeing the gem. However, they did not respond and Jacob was left with the diamond but owing Rs 23 lakhs to the Nizam. Thereafter, the Nizam repeatedly telegraphed Jacob demanding the return of his money. It must be noted here that Jacob had paid Pittar Leverson & Co their full asking price for the gem (£150,000 – and at the prevailing rate of exchange that was approximately Rs 22 lakhs). The 23 lakhs still due to him from the Nizam constituted his profit. He was still in possession of the stone, but he did not have the requisite funds to pay back the Nizam. Jacob might well have found another buyer for the gem from among his royal clientele, but he was not given an opportunity to do so. He begged the Nizam to give him time to repay the amount and repeatedly sought Abid's assistance to reason with the Nizam. But Mahboob himself was under pressure from his Prime Minister and the Resident for the recovery of the huge advance.

Left with no alternative, the Nizam filed charges against Jacob in the High Court of Calcutta. On Friday September 11, 1891, Jacob was arrested, charged with criminal misappropriation and criminal breach of trust and was served with summons to produce the valuable diamond. Under his direction, the Imperial diamond was recovered and deposited in the Bank of Bengal for safe-keeping pending outcome of the proceedings. The High Court released Jacob on bail and stipulated that the Nizam should be present as a witness. However, as a native Indian ruler and the foremost prince of India, the Nizam of Hyderabad could not come to court; moreover, his Counsel Mr Woodroffe pleaded that his coming to Calcutta would be very expensive and inconvenient. Accordingly, a special commission was appointed to proceed to Hyderabad to record the Nizam's testimony. Jacob was asked to be present, so that he would have the opportunity of putting questions to the Nizam in defence of himself.

News of the appointment of the commission evoked various reactions – both among the nobles of the court and among the Nizam's subjects. When the matter appeared to be reaching disturbing proportions, apparently fanned by his detractors, Mahboob resorted to a most unusual method to reach out to his subjects. He wrote a letter to his Prime Minister Nawab Sir Asman Jah Bahadur, requesting that it be published in the *Jareeda*, a popular Urdu newspaper. Dated October 2, 1891 the letter sought to assuage the feelings of his subjects since "the idea of a reigning prince giving evidence in a judicial matter is distasteful to the people as being derogatory to his dignity as a ruler, and, foreign to usage of the country." He attributes the expression of such opinions to several sources, writing: "First and foremost, it emanates from men actuated entirely by a feeling of loyalty and devotion to the person of their ruler, so characteristic of the people of Hyderabad. But it is to be feared that in the case of some, it is due

to a desire to create in my mind, a distrust of the faithful officials who have been acting for me in this matter and, to bring discredit on the administration; and possibly, in the case of a few individuals, to a design to get rid of the Commission and thus defeat the prosecution." The Nizam further clarifies the circumstances leading up to the institution of the case stating that, "Mr. Jacob came to me highly recommended, and I was led to place in him greater trust than he deserved. The result was that he acted in such a manner, that it became necessary to take criminal proceedings against him." Even the commission, he claims, was set up with his knowledge and approval to enable the Nizam to give evidence and to ensure that Jacob "should have a fair trial and the fullest opportunity of defending himself." Mahboob's letter is eloquent on the system of justice, the right to a fair trial, the dignity of the sovereign, the duties of a Muslim prince and the guidance of the Holy Koran. Justifying the situation, he concludes by stating that even his Imperial Highness, the Prince of Wales, "appeared in person, more than once, before some of the English Courts, to give evidence."[14]

The Imperial Diamond Case Special Commission met at Safiabad Palace on October 5, 1891. Jacob was conspicuously absent, fearing that his life would be in danger were he to come to Hyderabad. In spite of the assurances provided by the Resident Sir Denis Fitzpatrick and the Nizam, Jacob's Counsel Mr Inverarity produced a telegram declaring that Jacob was very ill in Bombay and had been advised by his doctors against travelling to Hyderabad. The Nizam was cross-examined for several days when he provided details of his entire business dealings with Jacob. He revealed that from time to time he had purchased jewellery from Jacob and that the present transaction was purely on the condition of approval or non-approval (*passand* or *na passand*). Illuminating details of court hierarchy, palace intrigues, Abid's proximity to the Nizam and the flurry of telegrams between Hyderabad, Ootacamund, Simla and Calcutta (between the Nizam, Abid – who was on holiday – Jacob and

Abid & Co, established by Albert Abid from profits gained by brokering deals between the Nizam and jewellery dealers.

the Bank of Bengal) culminating in the arrival of the diamond in Hyderabad were revealed.

The trial of Alexander Malcolm Jacob finally commenced in the Calcutta High Court on December 9, 1891 with the cross-examination of Albert Abid. After serving as an interpreter of Persian into English for the Shah of Iran, Abid had come to India with one Colonel Euan Smith. He subsequently gained employment with the Nizam and held a privileged and trusted position as Mahboob's chamberlain. By virtue of his close proximity to his master, he was able to act as a broker to all those who wished to sell anything to the Nizam. He usually charged a commission of 10 percent, and in this manner was able to accumulate enormous wealth.[15] Abid's commission on the sale of the diamond was to be Rs 5 lakhs (Rs 500,000), leaving Jacob a hefty profit of Rs 18 lakhs (Rs 1,800,000).

As the case unfolded, various witnesses were called upon to testify, including Mrs Abid, Sir Asman Jah, officials of the Bank of Bengal, Kilburn & Co and Jacob himself. After Mr Woodroffe, Counsel for the prosecution, concluded his arguments Mr Inverarity presented his case for the defence. It was his contention that the prosecution had failed to prove any criminal action against Jacob, who had "acted thoroughly *bona fide* throughout" – in an open and forthright manner, co-operating with all the investigations. "With regard to the price paid for the stone by Mr. Jacob, and the price demanded from

the Nizam, there was no dishonest action. The seller was not bound to disclose what he paid for an article. A tradesman did not always speak the truth, and if Mr. Jacob had not strictly adhered to facts when endeavouring to hasten the conclusion of the transaction, he was not guilty of criminal conduct." Moreover, it was established that since the accused was already a very wealthy man, there was no motive to swindle the Nizam. The defence also asserted that even after the Resident's representation against acquisition of the stone, the Nizam had parted with Rs 23 lakhs even before he saw the gem. This implied that "the Nizam meant to have it." Like other native princes, he said, the Nizam was a "person of vain and ostentatious disposition, and he certainly would jump at the prospect of having possession of the finest brilliant in the world."[16] Finally, since the Resident, Sir Fitzpatrick was scheduled to leave Hyderabad, the Nizam had every intention of secretly buying the gem.

The Imperial (Jacob) Diamond shown actual size.

On December 23, 1891, the Imperial Diamond Case terminated in a unanimous acquittal on all counts of Alexander Malcolm Jacob. The sympathy of the public had throughout the hearings been in favour of Jacob and the jury was of the opinion that nothing Jacob did was with the intention of defrauding his noble patron. Crucial to Jacob's acquittal was the fact that the Nizam's evidence, taken by the Special Commission at Hyderabad, was declared inadmissible. Mr Justice Wilson, in giving his decision, stated that the Nizam was not dead and was therefore not incapable of giving evidence. With reference to the huge expenses that would be incurred and the inconvenience of moving the Nizam's "Zenana and a thousand people", he declared that he was not concerned with "the point of view of State and policy" and concluded: "I do not think it has been shown that the Nizam, traveling as he might, could not come here and give his evidence, if he desired to do so, within such limits of expense as would be perfectly consistent with what is reasonable."[17]

After the criminal trial came to an end, Jacob pressed for the return of the diamond on the grounds that he had not received the entire purchase price. However, one Mahomed Yusuf Khan instituted a civil suit against Jacob. The matter was dismissed by the court, since there was nothing to establish that the complainant was the Nizam of Hyderabad. Eventually though, the Imperial diamond case was settled out of court. Ownership of the diamond was awarded to the Nizam and Jacob only received a refund of the amount he had paid towards legal costs. Some idea of the nature of the settlement may be got from a letter written by Jacob clarifying his position, to the *Civil and Military Gazette*, reproduced in the *Bombay Gazette* dated May 21, 1892. Jacob unequivocally states that the Nizam did not pay anything towards his costs and "The only sum he has paid from first to last is 23 lakhs which he paid me on the 4th of July 1891, as half the purchase money of the diamond, out of which sum I paid to Kilburn and Co. the equivalent of £150,000. The exchange being at that time 15.38 brought the amount to about Rs 21 lakhs." Of the balance, "I paid into court Rs 150,000, and at the time of settlement this sum was returned to me, and nothing else, and it was a portion of the 23 lakhs. So the only money I received is a little over 2 lakhs. In fact the sum they gave me is less than 10 per cent on the transaction, a fee which a common broker would claim. My expenses during the proceedings in both courts are Rs. 285,000, thus it leaves me a loser of about Rs. 80,000 saying nothing of the trouble, worry, indignities, and the loss of time because during all that time my business was shut up."

The whole affair left Jacob a broken man. He closed his shop in Simla, and died in obscurity in Bombay in 1921. British records of the estates of persons who died in India and Burma contain the following entry dated August 2, 1921: "Letters of Administration having effect throughout the Bombay Presidency of the Property and Credits of Alexander Malcolm Jacob alias Jacob of Simla late of Bombay

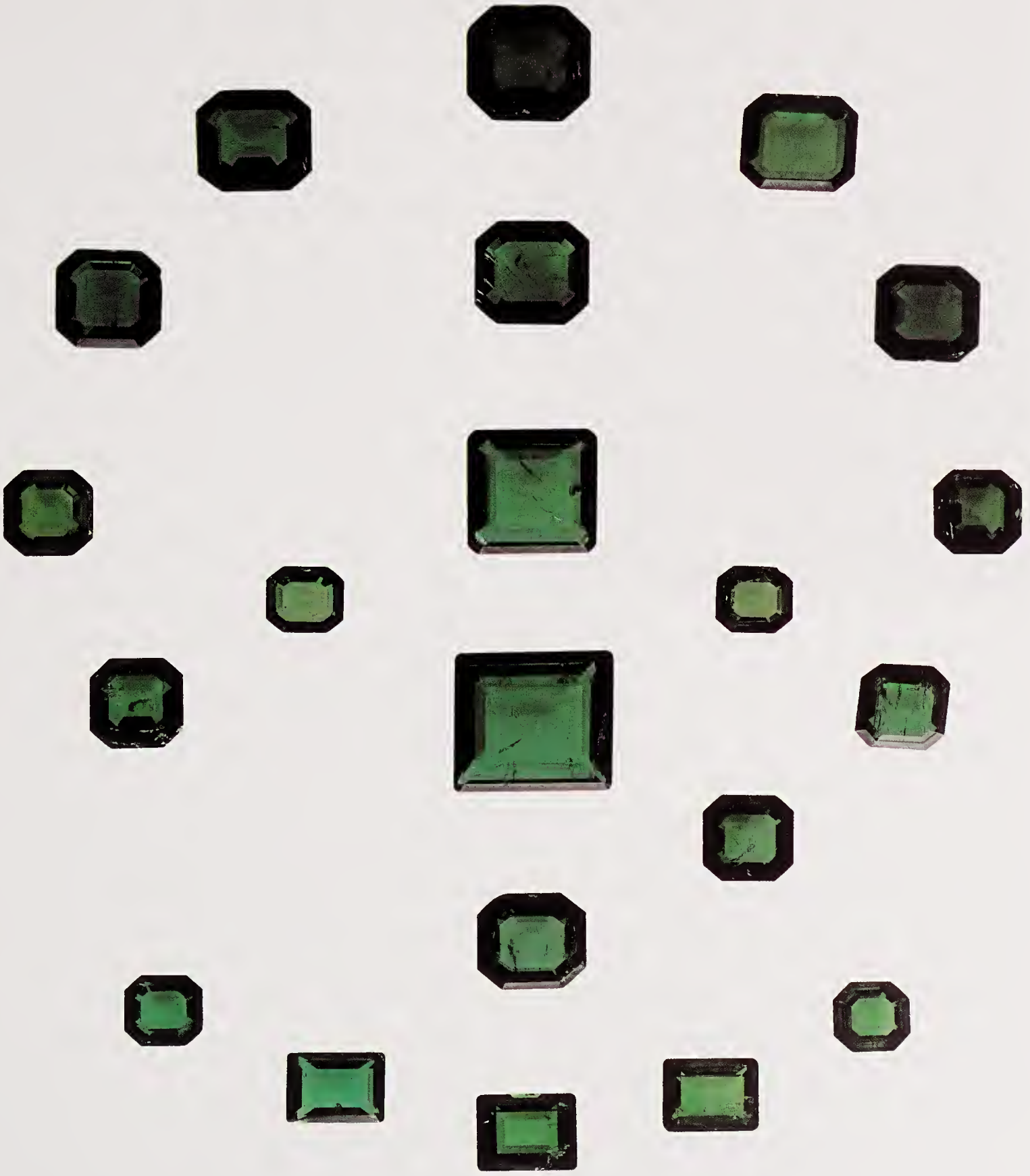
European deceased who died at Bombay on the ninth day of January One thousand nine hundred and twenty one were duly granted by His Majesty's High Court or Judicature at Bombay on the 2nd day of August 1921, to the Administrator General of Bombay and his successors in the said office for the time being – he having presented the usual petition in such case required. Estate under Rupees 382-0-0 after deducting debts."[18]

Based on all the testimonies it appears that Abid might have been instrumental in misleading the Nizam and Jacob. All telegrams and correspondence between the Nizam and Jacob and vice versa seem to have passed through him. Under Abid's influence Jacob had taken the Nizam's approval of the gem and the completion of the deal for granted. Unforeseen circumstances had neither been anticipated nor the eventuality of a failure envisaged. From the many exchanges between Albert Abid and Jacob in the period between April, May and June 1891, when Jacob offered the gem for 46 lakhs and his arrival in Hyderabad with the diamond, it is evident that Jacob proceeded in the manner he did because he was entitled to do so, on the basis of Abid's advice.

Even in 1891, the sensational nature of the trial is borne out by the fantastic and fictional stories that appeared in various newspapers. A Lahore paper, stated that the "stone was originally the property of the deposed Emperor of Brazil who, to make a provision for the ex-Empress, disposed of it to a Syndicate in London."[19] The story was even published in the London papers. In September 1891, the *Pall Mall Gazette* featured an article entitled "Mr Isaacs, A Romance of an Oriental Jewel Merchant." Partly fact, partly fiction, the story re-constructed Jacob's early life, tracing his journey from Constantinople to Bombay and thence to Hyderabad "in company with a merchant who was conveying a shipment of ladies for the Nizam's Zenana." Young Jacob Barre changed his name to Suliman Roomani, professed to follow Islam and entered the employment of Mahboob Ali Pasha's father Afzal-ud-Daula. The story narrates how he served the maharajas of Alwar and Dholpur before finally establishing his business in Simla.[20] Jacob's curio shop in Simla was likened to Aladdin's cave. He was rumoured to be an Armenian, a Levantine Jew, a Muslim, a double agent, and a specialist in black magic. Key figures in three novels of the period were modelled on him.[21] But the fateful day in July 1891 when he walked into Chow Mahalla with the diamond changed his life forever – it was the beginning of a destiny that dragged him to Court, ruined his reputation, laid bare his entire business practices to scrutiny, bankrupted him, and ended with his death.

Even Mahboob lost interest in the stone and put it away forever. However apocryphal the story might be of his having wrapped the stone in a dirty rag and tucking it away in a table drawer, it merely contributed to the mystery and romance of the Jacob affair. One can only conclude in the words of Edwin Streeter, who wrote, "It is as if the diamond needed, even in history, a dark background to show up its strangely fascinating hues."[22]

Mahboob Ali Khan, a connoisseur of gems.



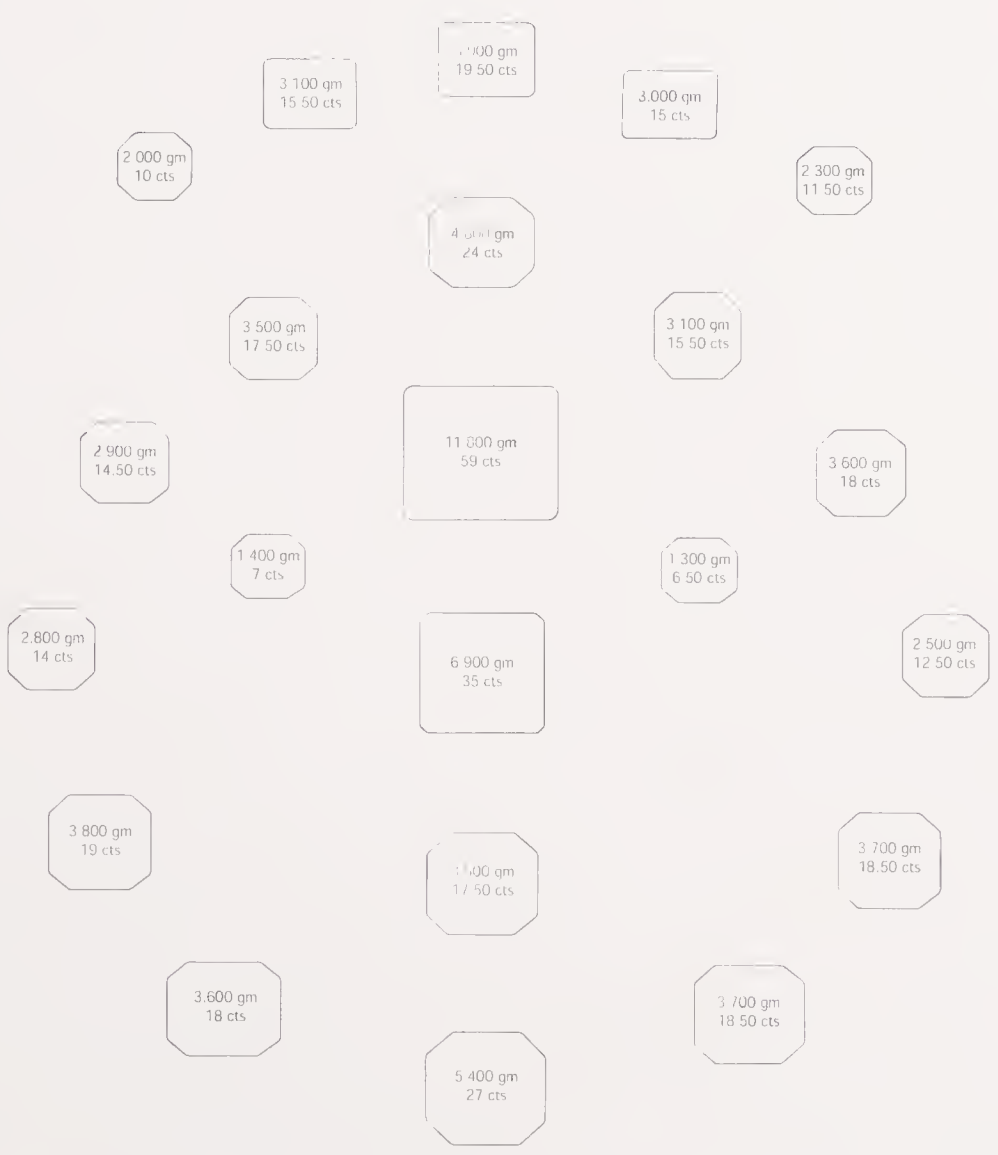
## Nageena-i-Zamarrud Kanval Wa Khurd

Emeralds
Colombia
18th century
Different sizes
Weight: 413.50 carats
NJ 95.32/1-22

A collection of 22 rectangular and octagonal table-cut emeralds of various weights (as indicated in the drawing), together weighing 413.50 carats.

The largest stone weighs 59 carats and the smallest one 6.50 carats. Without exception, the gems are all of outstanding colour and clarity with only a small number of inclusions. From the quality, size, lustre and intensity of the green of these gems, the rough stones undoubtedly originated in Colombia – perhaps from the Muzo mines located not far from Bogota. Based on studies in recent years, it has been established that these mines yielded emeralds of the most beautiful rich saturated green colour.

Colombian emeralds started appearing in India in large quantities in the early 16th century. They found their way to the Mughal court – where they were most esteemed and realized the highest prices. Emperor Jahangir greatly admired these gems recognizing that they were from the 'new' mines as opposed to the 'old' mine stones from Egypt. The Cleopatra mines, located in Mount Zebarah in Egypt, were the only known source of emeralds in the ancient world. But until the discovery of the South American mines, quantities that came to India were small and the demand was limited. However, the plunder of the Inca treasures and the discovery of



the Chivor and Muzo mines by the conquistadors introduced gems of immense size and quality through the Spanish-Portuguese trade into India, Persia, the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and Europe. Rough gems landed in Goa and were cut, carved or engraved by the skilled lapidarists of Gujarat.

Today, as a consequence of scientific studies, gemmologists are in a position to determine the exact geographical origin of emeralds by studying and analysing the inclusions in the stones. Oxygen isotope values in emeralds reflect the composition and temperature of the fluids that eventually crystallized to form the emerald, as well as the composition and temperature of the rocks that the fluids journeyed through before their consolidation into gemstones. According to researchers, "There is a narrow range of these isotope values for each site where emeralds have been discovered worldwide. Along with more traditional gemmological aspects, such as optical properties and the inclusion of other materials, researchers can use these unique isotope values to pinpoint where an emerald was 'born'."[23] Until such tests are done, we can only speculate on the geographical origin of these stones.

There is no documentation or record that provides any clues whatsoever to the provenance of the 22 emeralds. The gems were obviously purchased as a collection, since they are all together in a specially prepared case. They were in all likelihood assembled over a period of time by a dealer and carefully matched for a suite of jewels. Even the case, a typical velvet-lined jewellery box, provides no clues.

In 1950, when Dinshah J Gazdar examined the Nizam's collection, he is reputed to have stated that "their colour is deep green, their lustre perfect." When the Nizam's jewels were offered for sale, Herbert Rosenthal, the French dealer, admired these emeralds and those set in the jewels and was quoted in *India Today* magazine: "As a judge of precious stones for over 50 years, I have never seen in my life such wonderful emeralds. For their quality and their brightness the ensemble present in the sale is exquisite. Simply out of this world!"[24]

It is most likely that the emeralds entered the Asaf Jah collection during the reign of Mahboob Ali Pasha. A connoisseur and lover of gems, it was customary for Mahboob to spend long hours examining and studying gems and pearls. Dealers flocked to Hyderabad, seeking to sell gems and jewels to the Nizam. According to Jayant Chawlera[25] the gems once belonged to Czar Nicholas I of Russia and might be from the Russian mines[26]. They are purported to have been purchased by Mahboob Ali Pasha from T R Tawker & Sons, a family-run jewellery establishment based in Madras.[27] In the late 19th and early 20th century hoards of jewels and gems, tracing their provenance to Empress Eugenie of France, the Czar of Russia and other members of Russia's rarefied aristocracy (after the Russian revolution) and to the treasury of the Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid II, who was deposed in 1909, appeared on the European gem market. Indian maharajas who were travelling on the continent became major buyers. Nirmala Raje Bhonsle, granddaughter of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda (a buyer of fabulous gems), is believed to have stated that her "grandmother had some very good personal jewellery bought from Russian grand dukes after the Revolution, mostly big emeralds."[28] During his reign, Mahboob Ali Pasha played host to various visiting members of Russian aristocracy, including Grand Duke Alexander.

But even if their Russian or Colombian origin were established, it would still not conclusively determine how and when the gems entered the Asaf Jah collection. According to some sources, the Nizam of Hyderabad purchased magnificent emeralds "from a Persian jeweller for eighty lakhs of rupees at the time of the 1911 Delhi Durbar."[29] Osman Ali Khan had ascended the throne in September 1911 and had travelled to Delhi for the event where he might have been offered these exceptional gemstones.

All such stories are based on hearsay and are by and large apocryphal. What is irrefutable is that in the late 19th and early 20th century, fabulous emeralds from India's imperial treasuries were set into ornaments by the great jewellers of Europe.

Hans Nadelhoffer's documentation of the Cartier legend reveals that the firm handled some of the most extraordinary emeralds from India. Innumerable commissions were undertaken for the maharajas. Carved emeralds which they obtained in India (for nowhere else in the world was the tradition of carving emeralds executed with the same finesse, precision and harmony as in Mughal India), table-cut emeralds and emerald beads were all set into extraordinary jewels. The magnificent turban ornament created in 1926 for Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala, the famous Nawanagar emerald necklace and the Maharaja of Dhrangadhra's emerald-set turban jewel are only a few among many. The Boucheron commission for the ruler of Patiala also involved the use of splendid emeralds.

Of particular note is the fact that, in catering to the insatiable Indian passion for emeralds, Cartier drew upon stones from various other sources as well. For example, for the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar, Cartier designed and executed a necklace of "seventeen rectangular emeralds, including a stone of 70 carats which came from the Turkish sultan."[30] If indeed Osman Ali Khan acquired these gems, a Turkish source cannot be ruled out. The deposed Caliph of Turkey was, for many years, a dependant of Osman Ali Khan. In fact, strategic marriages were forged for Osman's two eldest sons with the daughter and niece of the Caliph. It is alleged that Osman supported the Caliph's entire family for many years when they were exiled from their homeland. However, that would imply that the stones entered the Asaf Jah collection only in the 1930s. Osman had by this time become quite frugal and had withdrawn into the recesses of his palace. It seems unlikely that he would have invested a huge sum of money on adding gems to an already well-stocked treasury.

Significantly though, the importance of the gems is evident from the fact that neither Mahboob Ali Pasha (who must have purchased them) nor Osman Ali Khan (who inherited them) was tempted to set them into jewels. Perhaps even in the late 19th century, the anachronous rationale of an easily transportable treasury remained unchanged. A correspondent for the *San Francisco Chronicle* informs his readers that the Nizam, Mahboob Ali Pasha "with his immense revenues, can well afford to spend millions for precious stones. Why he does so is, I think, quite as interesting as the fact that he does. Ever since the first convulsion among the native princes of India, it has been their custom to put their wealth in as portable a form as possible. They buy jewels and gold."[31] The emeralds are part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

# Turban Ornaments

## Sarpech Bachkani Almas Kanval Wa Munni Zamarrud

Gold set with diamonds, emerald beads and cabochon rubies
Hyderabad
19th century
H: 5.8 cm  L: 11 cm
Weight: 138 gm
NJ 95.12

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) in the form of a semi-circular headband set in the centre with a large rose-cut pear-shaped diamond on top of an oval diamond, and a flat diamond with cabochon ruby pendant below. On either side, a row of rose-cut diamonds with emerald bead finials and flat old-cut diamonds set with cabochon rubies pendant. The centre gem surmounted with a diamond-encrusted bird, with finely-etched feathers, cabochon ruby eyes and a diamond *taveez* bead hanging from the beak.

North and south coalesce in this elegant and beautifully-designed jewel, intended, as the title suggests, for a child (*bachkani*). The gems are completely encased in gold and the flat diamonds are foiled for brilliance. Additionally, minuscule claws hold the gems securely in their setting. The weight of the pear-shaped gem is approximately 12 carats and the total weight of the other diamonds, more than 100 carats.

The lustre and luminosity that characterize Golconda gems are apparent in the collection of diamonds in this jewel. Indian lapidarists improvised the rose-cut and old-cut to make optimum use of irregular stones without reducing their weight. According to historians, Benares and Lucknow were the most important centres where "the diamond cutters who prepare the table diamond so popular in India, and the rose diamond"[32], practised their craft.

Stylistically, and on the basis of workmanship, this jewel dates to the mid-19th century. The sheer size and quality of the gems implies that this was a special piece made for a special occasion. Mahboob Ali Pasha, the sixth Nizam, ascended the throne when he was merely two-and-a-half-years old. In accordance with the feudal customs of court, *durbars* were conducted with due pomp and ceremony. Until he attained majority in 1884, innumerable occasions must have presented themselves warranting a special and unique jewel befitting a young boy king.

The jewel is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Kalan Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas Ba Awaiza-i-Zamarrud

Gold set with emeralds, diamonds, emerald drops and diamond drops
India
Late 19th century
H: 19.5 cm L: 23 cm
Weight: 290 gm
NJ 95.60

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) with table-cut emeralds, old-cut diamonds, emerald drops and briolette diamond drops set in gold. The jewel is in five open-work, hinged foliate sections suspending five emerald drops. It is likely that there were orginally two more emerald drops judging by the gaps on each side. The centre section set with an oval emerald surrounded with eight rectangular and round emeralds in a circular arrangement; the hinged sections on either side symmetrically set with emeralds and diamonds tapering to triangular end pieces, each with three emeralds and small diamonds. Surmounted by a tapering aigrette with eight graduated emeralds, each set within a diamond-encrusted lotus motif suspending briolette diamond drops on either side and an emerald drop at the end.

Colombian emeralds carefully matched for colour, lustre and purity are claw set in open-back light mounts, amidst a virtual garden of diamonds, lending an incredible aura of ethereal delicacy to the ornament. The total weight of the six emerald drops alone is estimated to be over 300 carats.[33] Of all the regalia of Indian royalty, turban ornaments (*sarpech*, *sarpatti*, *kalgi*, *jigha* and *turra*) were the most visible symbols of monarchy, power and wealth, and the finest gems in the treasury were used for these jewels.

From the sheer quality and assemblage of emeralds, it appears to be a commissioned piece, drawing upon loose gems in the treasury and made by a jeweller working in the court or even by one of the foreign jewellery firms operating in Calcutta or Bombay who specialized in combining Indian motifs with Western settings. Several jewellers were close to the Nizam and they periodically established their workshops in the palace to execute important orders for special occasions. Based on designs generated by these jewellers, the Nizam would select stones from the treasury and commission the jewel. The jeweller often only had to supply the balance smaller stones required to complete the piece.

In 1894, Mahboob Ali Pasha celebrated the silver jubilee of his accession to the Asaf Jah throne. In that year, he probably commissioned and purchased quite a few jewels from firms like Hamilton & Co, Calcutta. The design and workmanship of this *sarpech* implies that it might have been made in that year by this establishment.

The jewel rests in its own special leather case and is accompanied by an inventory label wherein a value of Rs 700,000 is assigned to it. To Osman Ali Khan it was an important jewel and it is included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Larli Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with spinels and diamonds
India
Early 20th century
H: 17 cm L: 21 cm Centre spinel: 1.5 x 2 cm Oval spinel: 1.4 x 2.3 cm
Weight: 167 gm
NJ 95.42

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) in hinged sections with rectangular table-cut spinels and old-cut and rose-cut diamonds in an open-work foliate gold setting, tapering on either side to pear-shaped spinels and a spinel bead pendant. A floral spray aigrette hinged at the top with a large oval spinel surrounded with diamonds, suspending a faceted spinel bead.

Lightweight open-back mounts with minuscule claws hold the gems securely in their setting. The aigrette is fitted on a coiled spring – *en tremblant* – so that the piece gently sways and sparkles with movement. These techniques were common in late 19th and early 20th century jewellery manufacture in Europe.

The eight table-cut spinels together weigh approximately 250 carats and the 190 Golconda diamonds, approximately 100 carats. The selection of spinels has been done very carefully, the three centre stones (oval, rectangle and bead) of dark colour, while the gems on either side are all of a uniform lighter hue. Few jewellers could afford to hold such large stocks of high quality gems.

Spinels originally came from Badakshan in Afghanistan and for many centuries were mistaken for rubies. Spinels and rubies are generally found in the same mine, the spinel being lighter in weight and colour. They also occur in a variety of other colours, the most sought-after being the pinkish-red, seen in this turban ornament. They are also found in large sizes, and are therefore often just polished, drilled and used as beads. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Mogok mines in Burma (Pegu) yielded the best rubies and spinels. The principal gem traders were Chettiar merchants from south India – their homes in and around the great port town of Masulipatam. From Mogok to Masulipatam to Hyderabad, the path was well trodden by these gem dealers.

The jewel rests in its own special fitted leather case and is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kalgi Almas Parab

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
H: 19 cm W: 5.4 cm
Weight: 130 gm
NJ 95.82/2

A turban plume (*kalgi*)[34], the lower panel comprising a central pear-shaped flat diamond with open-backed diamond-set cusped petal surround. The tapering scroll surmount set with flat diamonds and bordered with cusped petals and a pearl pendant. The reverse enamelled in black with touches of red and green, with a receptacle for a feather and a tapering stem to tuck the jewel into the folds of the turban.

The large flat diamond in the centre is of exceptional size and weighs approximately 25 carats. The floral motifs rendered in fine quality black enamel on the rear is most unusual. The jewel was designed to be worn with the *sarpatti* (facing page).

Turban ornaments were crowning symbols of temporal power and evolved from a simple feather to elaborate combinations of gemstones. After the disintegration of the Mughal empire, the small and compact *kalgi* became grander and grander in the provincial courts. The simple *kalgi* was no longer sufficient as a statement of power and wealth against the traditional Indian headgear – a turban composed of yards of richly brocaded fabric wound in layers around the head – so the need for more elaborate ornaments arose. After the British annexed Oudh in 1856, no Indian ruler was permitted to use the title 'king' or wear anything resembling an 'imperial' crown. The combination of *sarpech*, *kalgi* and *turra* was India's answer to the imperial crown. Often inversely proportional to the size of the kingdom, turban ornaments became increasingly flamboyant, soaring upwards in a blaze of fire and light.

The jewel forms part of the collection of items in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpatti Almas Parab

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
W: 4.5 cm  L: 49.5 cm
Weight: 197 gm
NJ 95.81/2

A turban ornament (*sarpatti*) designed as a long fillet to be tied around the turban, with the central section comprising five hinged flowers, each set in the middle with a flat table-cut diamond with open-backed diamond-set cusped petal surrounds and tapering to nine similarly set small flowers on either side.

The large table-cut diamonds in the centre of each flower are all *kundan*-set in gold, their size rare and their quality extraordinary. The diamond petals are edged with gold and set at angles to simulate an actual flower. The diamond flowers (*almas phool*) that make up this fabulous jewel are very realistically fashioned. The reverse is enamelled with floral motifs in red and green on a white ground. The quality and detail of the enamel work is outstanding. This jewel, the accompanying *kalgi* (facing page) and a pair of armbands (NJ 95.83/1-2) are among the earliest items in the collection. They have been made by a master craftsman in the Nizam's court.

In the Nizam's inventory, this piece has been erroneously classified as a necklace (*kanthi*). However (like NJ 95.81/1), it is a *sarpatti* to be worn around a turban together with the plume. The value of these two pieces in the 1950 inventory is recorded as Rs 125,000. They are part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpatti Almas Parab

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
W (including pearl): 6 cm  L: 44.5 cm
Weight: 173 gm
NJ 95.81/1

A turban ornament (*sarpatti*) designed as a long band to be tied around the turban, with a large rectangular flat table-cut diamond in the centre with a pearl pendant and diamond-set side panels, and a row of ten diamonds within small rectangular panels on either side. The reverse is decorated in white enamel (*safed chalwan*).

The 31 flat table-cut diamonds that constitute this jewel are all foiled and *kundan*-set in gold. The inventory mistakenly classifies this piece as a necklace (*kanthi*). However, it was traditionally worn around the headgear together with the *kalgi* (facing page).[35] These two jewels along with another similar set (NJ 95.81/2 and NJ 95.82/2) date to the period prior to the fusion of the *sarpatti* and *kalgi* to form the familiar *sarpech*.

Early portraits of the Mughal emperors clearly indicate that turban ornaments were simple and elegant. Rows of pearls interspersed with emerald and spinel beads were strung around the turban and an upright plume (*kalgi*) – made up of imposing spinel beads and pearls or emerald drops – was attached to the front. As turban ornaments became more and more elaborate, especially in the provincial courts, the simple strands of pearls morphed into the *sarpatti*, while the *kalgi* became more majestic, set with precious gems and tucked into the front or side of the turban. It was only a short stylistic evolution thereafter before the band and plume were combined into a single striking jewel (*sarpech*) set with the most important gems in the treasury.

While the precise area of origin for this piece cannot be determined, white enamel has usually been attributed to the Deccan.[36] The large flat diamonds, the elegantly simple design and the outstanding quality of the enamel work together indicate that the jewel originated in the royal treasury. This item is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kalgi Almas Parab

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
H: 19.5 cm W: 5 cm
Weight: 135 gm
NJ 95.82/1

A turban plume (*kalgi*)[37] with a lower panel comprising a central pear-shaped table-cut diamond with diamond petal surround, and with a tapering diamond-set scroll surmount suspending a pearl. The reverse enamelled with floral motifs in black *mina* with a receptacle for a feather and a tapering stem to tuck the jewel into the folds of the turban.

The weight of the large pear-shaped diamond in the centre has been estimated to be approximately 25 carats – such large flat diamonds are very unusual and rare. The gems are all foiled and *kundan*-set in gold. This plume probably accompanies the *sarpatti* (facing page). Although the reverse of these jewels was never seen by anyone other than the wearer, the jeweller has given expression to his creative genius by contrasting the white enamel of the *sarpatti* with the monochrome black enamel of the plume.

Black enamel is rare and used very sparingly in traditional Mughal-style jewellery, no doubt because of the technical expertise required to fire the colour. Deccani craftsmen had obviously acquired the skills to execute very fine enamelling, as borne out by this piece. The plume is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Khurd Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with emeralds, diamonds and emerald drops
India
19th century
H: 11.5 cm L: 11.3 cm Centre emerald: 1.9 x 1.9 cm
Weight: 130 gm
NJ 95.37

A magnificent turban jewel (*sarpech*) set in hinged sections in an open-work floral design with a large table-cut octagonal emerald in the centre surrounded with old-cut diamonds and symmetrically set on either side with emeralds and diamonds and five emerald drops pendant. The tapering aigrette with seven emeralds surrounded with diamonds suspending a pear-shaped emerald set within a border of diamonds.

Obviously made for a child, the jewel combines traditional Indian motifs and European design sensibility in an open-back claw setting. The four largest emeralds are together estimated to weigh approximately 35 carats, while the combined weight of the other emeralds is in excess of 70 carats.

A treasure trove of readily accessible gemstones enabled the Nizam to commission some extraordinary jewels, as borne out by this particular ornament. Emeralds of various shapes and sizes have been harmoniously juxtaposed to complete a perfectly balanced design. Emeralds of this colour, quality, clarity and size are very rare.

The Mughal emperors coveted emeralds and acquired them in large quantities from Portuguese gem dealers who imported the stones from Colombia. In portrait miniatures dating to the 17th and 18th centuries, Jahangir and Shah Jahan are adorned with jewellery in which the green emerald is predominant – usually set in simple gold mounts in such ornaments as pendants, armbands, bracelets and rings. There were thousands of emeralds in the booty that was carried off by Nadir Shah to Persia after the sack of Delhi in 1739. The Nizams' passion for these gems is evident from the vast quantities of emeralds and emerald drops in the collection.

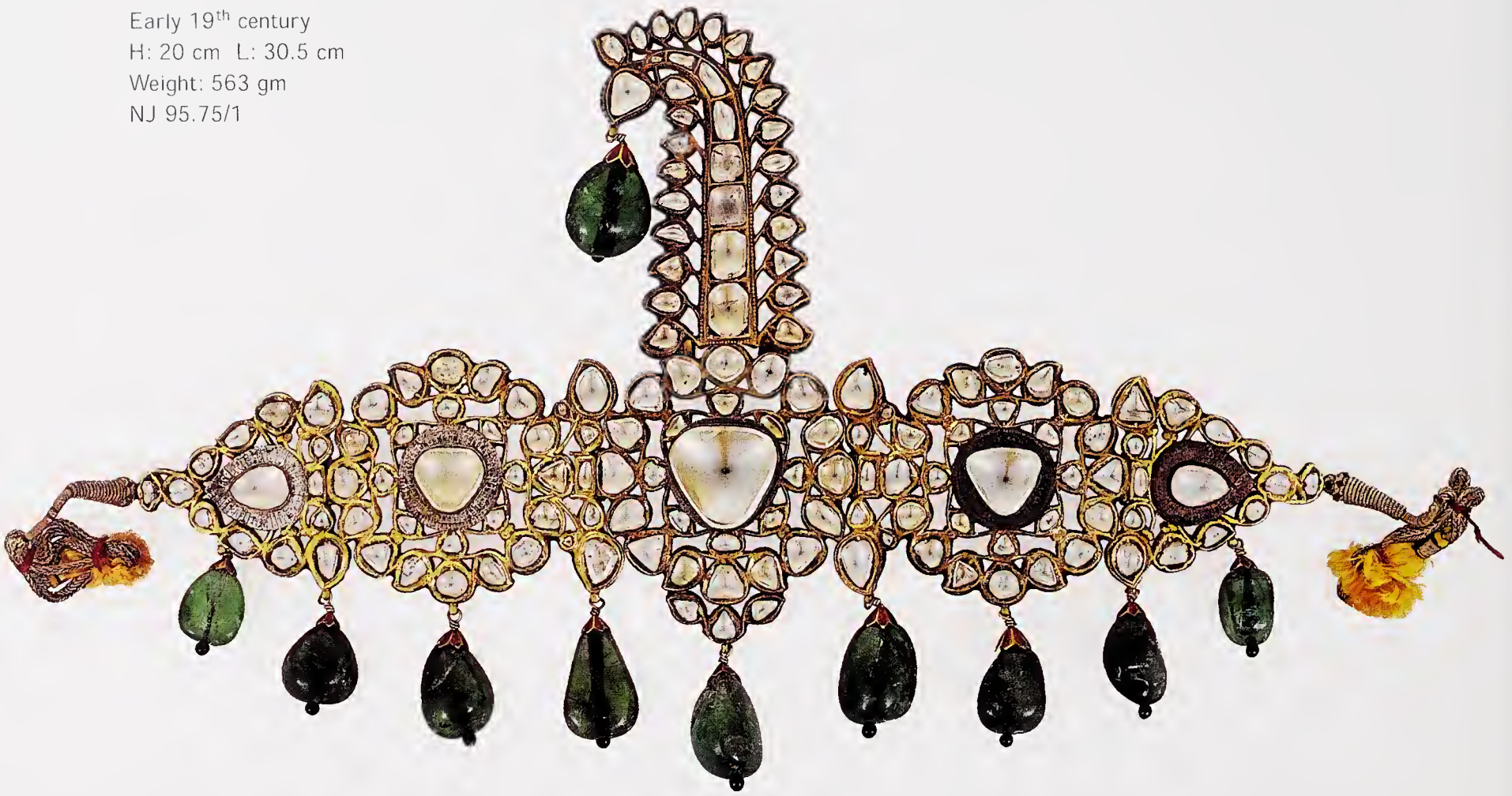
The Hyderabadi headgear (*dastar*), in the form of a long, conical and plain cap devoid of the voluminous folds of the traditional turban, was a perfect foil for turban ornaments. There are no fewer than 21 turban ornaments in the present collection, several of which incorporate some of the most fabulous gems. They range from typical Mughal-style jewels dating to the early 18th century to Deccani examples of the mid-18th century and to those that are a fusion of Indo-European designs and workmanship, such as this piece, which dates to the 19th century.

The remarkable similarity in design, workmanship and meticulous assemblage of stones in this jewel and in the emerald and ruby turban ornaments (NJ 95.60 and NJ 95.69) indicates that they were probably made at around the same time and perhaps even by the same jeweller.

This turban jewel has been included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Murassa

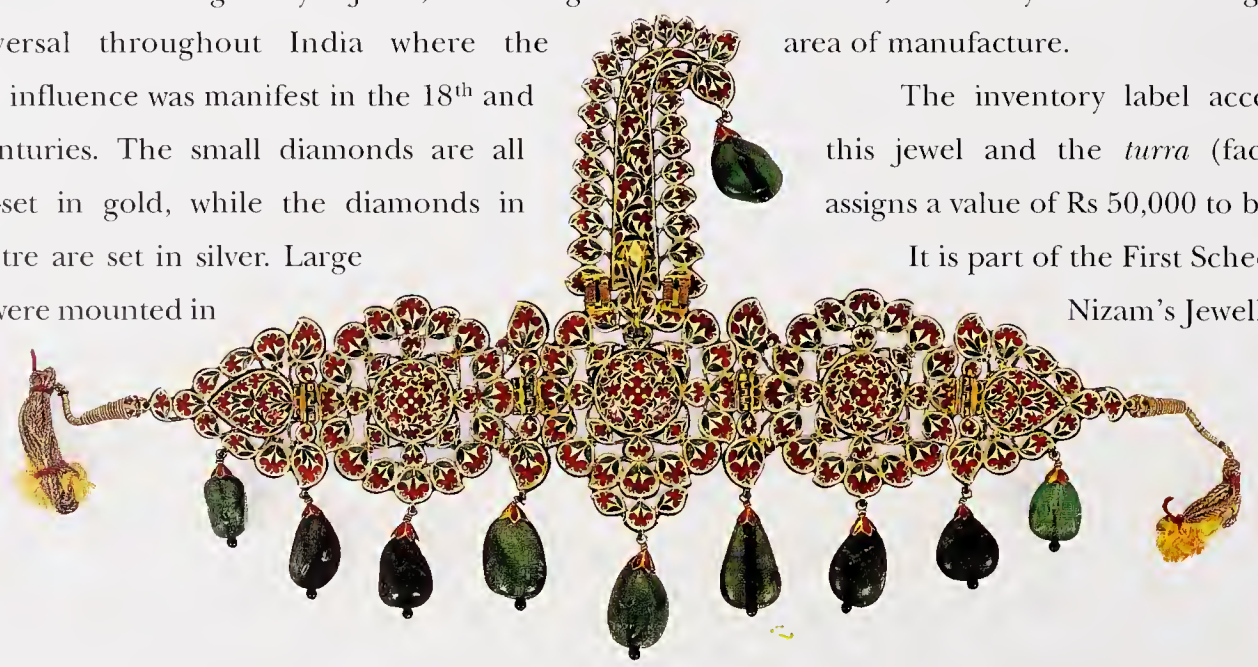
Gold and silver set with diamonds and emeralds drops; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
H: 20 cm L: 30.5 cm
Weight: 563 gm
NJ 95.75/1



A turban ornament (*sarpech*), with five open-work foliate cluster panels set in the front with foiled table-cut diamonds, suspending nine emerald drops. The tapering scroll aigrette with an emerald drop also set with table-cut diamonds. The reverse enamelled with red and green floral motifs on a white ground.

A classical Mughal-style jewel, this design is universal throughout India where the Mughal influence was manifest in the 18th and 19th centuries. The small diamonds are all *kundan*-set in gold, while the diamonds in the centre are set in silver. Large stones were mounted in silver in order to enhance the brilliance of an otherwise opaque gem – a device frequently used by jewellery manufacturers in Lucknow and the Deccan. In the aftermath of the demise of the Mughal empire, techniques of craftsmanship endured practically unchanged in provincial courts all over India. It is, therefore, often very difficult to assign a precise area of manufacture.

The inventory label accompanying this jewel and the *turra* (facing page) assigns a value of Rs 50,000 to both pieces. It is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.



## Turra

Gold and silver set with diamonds, emerald beads and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
L: 16 cm
Weight: 178 gm
NJ 95.75/2

This turban ornament (*turra*) is in the form of an enamelled and gem-set flower, the flower-head set with foiled table-cut diamonds in silver, with enamelling on gold on the reverse, suspending multiple pearl strands with emerald bead terminals. The *turra*, sometimes in the form of a bird, usually accompanied the *sarpech* and was worn tucked into the folds of the turban, with the pearl and emerald tassel hanging over one side of the forehead.

The long *sarpech* (facing page) and this *turra* are listed together in the Nizam's inventory. The inventory label assigns a value of Rs 50,000 to both the jewels. This piece is also part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
H: 5.4 cm L: 13 cm
Weight: 85 gm
NJ 95.72/6

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) in the form of an open-work plaque comprising three foliate panels set with emeralds and foiled table-cut diamond clusters. The centre emerald set within a row of small emeralds, each cut to simulate the petal of a flower. The reverse is enamelled in red and green on a white ground.

The emeralds are all set open-back, while the diamonds are encased in gold to permit enamelling on the reverse. The floral motifs and very fine quality of enamelling on the reverse is reminiscent of the *pietra dura* work of Shah Jahan's reign. Enamel motifs recreated a celestial garden with all manner of trees, and flowers of every hue.

It belongs to the collection of jewels assigned to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Yakhoot Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with rubies, diamonds and briolette diamond drops
India
Mid-19th century
H: 14.2 cm  L: 17.5 cm
Weight: 145 gm
NJ 95.69

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) in the form of hinged open-work sections set with table-cut rubies and old-cut diamonds in a floral design, with briolette drops and cabochon rubies in a frame of diamonds pendant below. The floral spray aigrette is set with diamonds and rubies suspending a faceted pear-shaped ruby surrounded with small diamonds.

This turban ornament brings together an outstanding collection of Burmese pigeon-blood rubies (only the faceted pear-shaped ruby suspended from the aigrette is perhaps from Thailand) totally weighing more than 100 carats. The three large golden-yellow briolette diamonds weigh about 65 carats. The setting of claws and boxed gold mounts is typical of the cross-fertilization of Indian and European workmanship in the late 19th and early 20th century. The entire *sarpech* can be separated into six smaller constituents which could be used as a brooch, pendant or as a jewel for the hair.

D F Karaka, Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan's unofficial biographer, narrates an interesting story about a reputed jeweller who offered Osman "two beautiful 25-carat rubies"[38] in about 1941-42. Like his father, Mahboob, Osman was well versed in the quality and value of gems and the stones before him elicited neither great wonderment nor delight. An attendant was instructed to bring a large steel trunk, which was full of "little bags of no particular charm or attraction." After careful perusal, the Nizam picked one small pouch and "drew from it some two dozen rubies of various shapes and sizes";[39] from another bag "he extracted a handful of emeralds. From yet another he drew pearls, and so on until almost every precious gem, each of incomparable beauty lay before the astonished jeweller's eyes." The jeweller recounts that Osman "was like a schoolboy producing marbles from his pocket. ...The two beautiful gems which I had brought with me looked mere baubles."[40] Karaka further states, "Nor was this the only trunk. For this fabulous wealth, unestimable by anyone, had been lying for years unset and unmounted, like pebbles, in bags stored in various trunks in the palace strongroom. No jeweller can ever value such priceless gems for if they were put on the market all at once, they would wreck it."[41]

The jewel is accompanied by an inventory label dating to *circa* 1950, which records a value of Rs 125,000. It is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Murassa

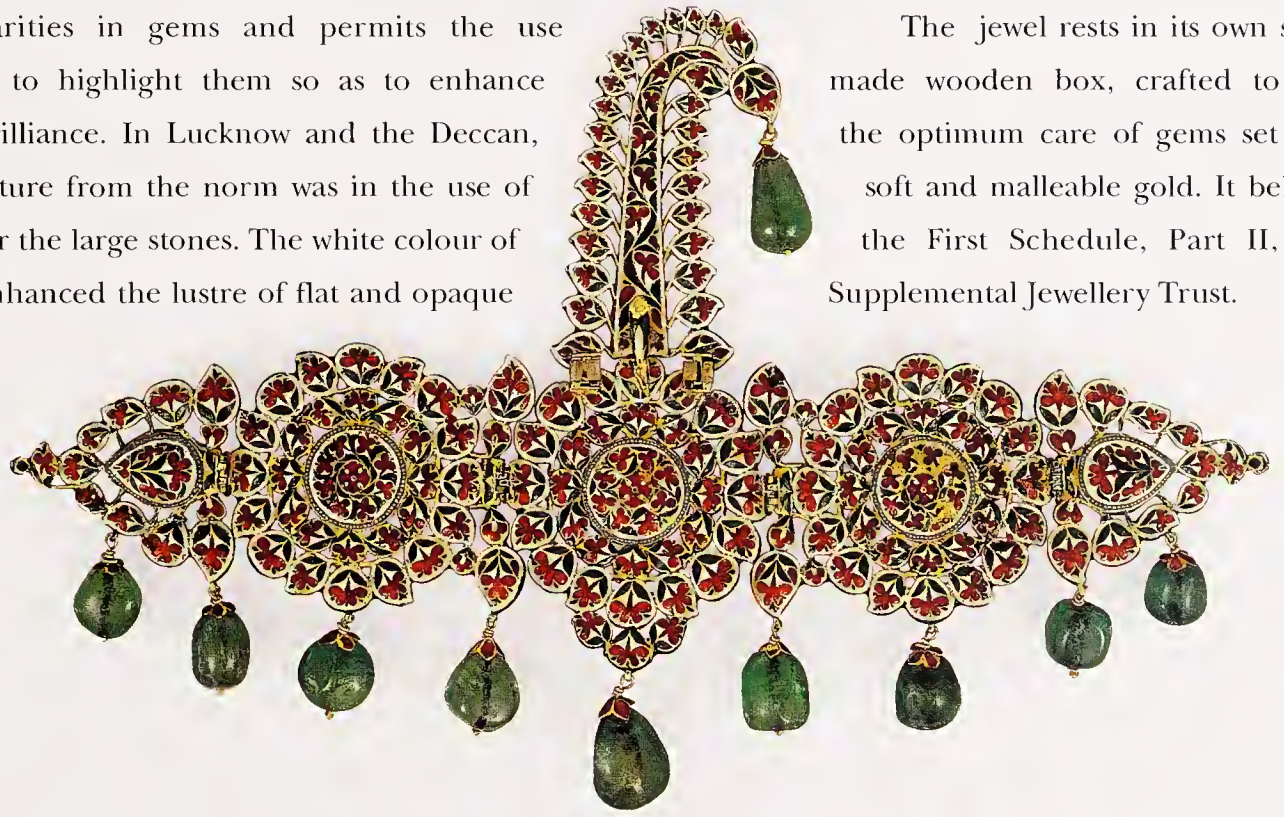
Gold set with diamonds and emerald drops; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
H: 19 cm  L: 29 cm
Weight: 441 gm
NJ 95.109

A classical Mughal-style turban ornament (*sarpech*), the front with five open-work foliate cluster panels set with foiled table-cut diamonds suspending nine emerald drops. The tapering scroll aigrette with a single emerald drop also set with table-cut diamonds. The reverse enamelled with red and green floral motifs on a white ground.

The flat diamonds are all encased in ribbons of gold (*kundan*) in a technique common to virtually all north Indian jewellery prior to the introduction of claw setting in the 19th century. In this method of setting gems, layers of narrow strips of pure malleable gold form a solid wedge around the gemstone. This technique allows the gem-setter to camouflage irregularities in gems and permits the use of foils to highlight them so as to enhance their brilliance. In Lucknow and the Deccan, a departure from the norm was in the use of silver for the large stones. The white colour of silver enhanced the lustre of flat and opaque diamonds. The red and green enamel palette was ubiquitous throughout north India during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Elaborate jewels such as this piece were frequently gifted by the ruler in recognition of valour and loyalty. As the Mughal viceroy in the Deccan, the Nizam in turn received gifts from the Mughal emperor. One such instance was in 1722, when the Mughal emperor awarded Mir Qamaruddin (the first Nizam) "a gold ornament for his turban, inlaid with emeralds and diamonds and an elephant and two horses..."[42] Throughout his service with the Mughal emperors, the first Nizam received jewels and jewelled swords as marks of honour.

The jewel rests in its own specially made wooden box, crafted to ensure the optimum care of gems set in very soft and malleable gold. It belongs to the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.



## Sarpech Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-18th century
H: 12 cm L: 36 cm
Weight: 220 gm
NJ 95.72/1

A turban ornament (*sarpech*)[43] comprising three hinged sections set with a large square table-cut engraved emerald in the centre and emeralds and flat table-cut diamonds in an open-work foliate design. In lieu of the usual string ties, this piece has emerald and diamond-set hinged pieces in the form of a long bracelet strip on either side to tie around the headgear. The tapering scroll aigrette with emeralds and diamonds.

The emeralds are all set open-back in gold mounts, while the diamonds are foiled in *kundan* settings and enamelled with red and green floral motifs on the reverse. The inscription on the centre emerald is not clear and only the word 'Allah...' is readable. The gem might have earlier been used as an amulet in a pendant or even as the centre-piece of an armband. The jewel is of typical Hyderabadi craftsmanship. A pair of armbands of identical workmanship, was sold in an international sale in 1999.[44]

The piece belongs to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-18th century
H: 12.5 cm L: 35 cm
Weight: 186 gm
NJ 95.72/3

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) comprising three foliate panels decorated with a large square table-cut emerald in the centre within emerald and table-cut diamond clusters. Five rectangular emeralds interspersed with diamonds ending in triangular emeralds are set in the form of a long strip on either side. The tapering scroll aigrette is set with emeralds and diamonds in open-back gold mounts.

The diamonds are foiled and *kundan*-set with red and green enamelling on a gold ground, on the reverse. A total of 47 emeralds and 89 diamonds have been meticulously arranged to form this ornament. This jewel was made to be worn by one of the male members of the Nizam's family or to be gifted to those whom the Nizam wished to honour.

This item forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-18th century
H: 12.3 cm  L: 35 cm
Weight: 149 gm
NJ 95.72/2

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) comprising three foliate panels decorated with a large octagonal table-cut emerald in the centre within emerald and table-cut diamond clusters. In lieu of the usual string ties, this piece has six emerald and diamond-set hinged pieces in the form of a long bracelet strip on either side to tie around the headgear. The tapering scroll aigrette is set with emeralds and diamonds. The emeralds are all set open-back in gold mounts. Only the diamonds are foiled and enclosed in gold and decorated with red and green enamelled floral motifs on the reverse. Both motifs and palette are typically Deccani.

A separate treasury was maintained for jewels to be given as gifts. To this treasury were assigned gems acquired by the Nizams in large quantities. While the precise origin of these emeralds cannot be determined, they are most likely from Colombia. Gems were cut and polished in India prior to being offered for sale in the various courts.

The jewel forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-18th century
H: 12 cm  L: 34.5 cm
Weight: 209 gm
NJ 95.72/4

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) comprising three foliate panels decorated with a large square table-cut emerald in the centre within emerald and table-cut diamond clusters. Long bands on either side set with emeralds and diamonds served to clasp the jewel around the turban. The tapering scroll aigrette is set with emeralds and diamonds. The emeralds are all set open-back in gold mounts, while the diamonds are foiled and *kundan*-set with red, green and yellow enamelled floral motifs on a gold ground.

The combination of open-back and *kundan* setting is typical of Deccani workmanship. In pieces such as this the quality and colour of the emeralds obviated the need to insert foils and permitted an open-back setting.

This item forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Sarpech Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-18th century
H: 13.5 cm  L: 15 cm
Weight: 135 gm
NJ 95.72/5

A turban ornament (*sarpech*) comprising three foliate panels decorated with a large cabochon emerald in the centre within emerald and table-cut diamond clusters. The tapering scroll aigrette is set with emeralds and diamonds. The emeralds are all set open-back in gold mounts, while the diamonds are foiled and *kundan*-set with red and green enamelled floral motifs on a gold ground.

The jewel is made up of 36 table-cut emeralds, besides the large cabochon centre-piece and flat diamonds of various shapes and weights. The piece would have originally extended on both sides to facilitate attachment to the turban. Jewellers attached to the Nizam's court executed such ornaments in large quantities to serve as gifts.

The jewel belongs to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kalgi Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-18th century
H: 16 cm  W: 5 cm
Weight: 78 gm
NJ 95.72/7

A turban ornament (*kalgi*)[45] with an octagonal table-cut emerald in the centre with emeralds and flat table-cut diamonds in an open-work foliate design. The tapering scroll aigrette set with rectangular emeralds and diamonds. The emeralds are set in open-back gold mounts, while the diamonds are foiled and *kundan*-set and enamelled in green on gold on the reverse. The stick used to insert the jewel into the folds of the turban is enamelled in green and white.

Turban ornaments such as the *sarpech*, *jigha* and *kalgi* were customarily gifted by the Nizam to those whom he wished to honour. This piece is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Turra-i-Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas Wa Yakhoot

Gold set with emeralds, diamonds and rubies
Probably Calcutta
Late 19th century
H: 12 cm W: 8 cm
Weight: 57 gm
NJ 95.58

A turban jewel (*turra*) set with old-cut diamonds, table-cut emeralds and faceted rubies in gold in the form of a stylized crown inset with flower blossoms with emerald centres and diamond petals. The top has seven vertical wire-sprays set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds.

While the crown design is very English, the use of faceted gems and the setting is reminiscent of jewellery made in Calcutta in the late 18th and right through to the middle of the 19th century. After his support in the revolt of 1857, the English regarded the Nizam as a 'faithful ally' of the British empire and the premier prince of India. Jewels such as this one were commissioned by the Nizam and worn as symbols of allegiance to the King of England.

The jewel is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Brooch Almas Chantara Numa Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
India
Late 19th–early 20th century
H: 6 cm W: 6 cm
Weight: 35 gm
NJ 95.5

A brooch in the design of a crescent moon and a six-pointed star with old-cut diamonds set *a jour* in gold. The crescent with round diamonds graduating from the centre and the star with a large diamond in the middle weighing approximately 30 carats and six points each set with three graduating diamonds, and tiny gems as fillers. No fewer than 24 minuscule claws hold the centre diamond firmly in its setting – a clear indication of the importance of the gem.

Crescent brooches were extremely popular in Europe at the end of the 19th centruy.[46] In the context of the Asaf Jahs, the crescent and star was a distinctive symbol of their Islamic faith. Although designed as a brooch with a pin at the back, photographs of Mir Osman Ali Khan clearly show that the jewel was worn as a turban ornament. Photographs Osman and his son Prince Azam Jah wearing this jewel are extant (pages 58 and 24).

The jewel forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Almas Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
India
Late 19th–early 20th century
L: 18.5 cm W: 16.5 cm
Weight: 128 gm
NJ 95.106

An impressive necklace (*kanthi*) entirely set with diamonds in a delicate lace pattern with a cartouche of motifs with round and oval diamonds in the centre amidst elaborate festoons; a pear-shaped diamond suspended from the middle, graduating to a single row of diamonds in the rear, ending in a Western-style clasp set with a rectangular diamond.

The 226 old-cut diamonds weigh more than 150 carats. The gems are all set in an open-back, light-admitting (*a jour*) claw setting. Elaborate necklaces such as these were fashionable in Victorian England in the 1870s, when this piece might have been made.

In the absence of a manufacturer's mark, it is very difficult to attribute the jewel to any particular firm, although Hamilton & Co, Calcutta, T R Tawker and P Orr & Sons, Madras, were all perfectly capable of making such jewels. A European jeweller is also believed to have been employed in the court of Mahboob Ali Pasha. He worked in Hyderabad, executing commissions in the European idiom, drawing upon the Asaf Jah treasury of loose gems.

Although the genesis of the design is non-Indian, the necklace was obviously made in India. While European jewellers worked with platinum, gold was the preferred material for jewellery manufacture in India. The Indian jeweller's skill is also manifest in the subtle manipulation of irregular stones. The seven large diamonds in the centre of the scrollwork forms are all of different shapes and sizes, yet the necklace is perfectly symmetrical and proportioned.

Such jewels are unique, since it would be practically impossible to replicate such an assembly of gems. The basic form of the necklace is very similar to another diamond necklace (NJ 95.31) – only the design details vary. This piece is also akin in workmanship and design to a diamond-studded watch chain (NJ 95.61) in the collection.

A rare photograph of Mir Osman Ali Khan shows him wearing this necklace (page 58). The ornament forms part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Marvareed

Gold set with diamonds and an emerald drop, with pearls and emerald beads; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
L: 43 cm  Pendant – H (including emerald drop): 8 cm  W: 4.6 cm
Weight: 88 gm
NJ 95.124

An open-work foliate cluster pendant set in the front with table-cut diamonds within foiled surrounds suspending an emerald bead. The reverse enamelled in green on a gold ground. The pendant strung on a necklace (*kanthi*) of pearls and emerald beads. The emerald bead, with an enamelled gold cap, weighs about 50 carats.

This pendant is very similar to another in the collection, shown on the facing page, and forms part of the jewels assigned to Osman Ali Khan's third wife, Ekbal Begum. In this piece, the gems are smaller but are nevertheless foiled and *kundan*-set in gold.

The use of smaller gems is more than compensated for by the fine and unusual monochrome enamel (*partajikam*) on the reverse. The rich dark green colour and the delicately executed flower-heads and flowering plants permit a Deccani attribution.

The necklace forms part of the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Marvareed

Gold set with diamonds and an emerald drop, with pearls and emerald beads; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
L: 46 cm  Pendant – H (including emerald drop): 8 cm  W: 4 cm
Weight: 80 gm
NJ 95.148

A foliate pendant set in the front with table-cut diamonds within foiled foliate surrounds suspending an emerald bead. The reverse enamelled in dark blue, translucent green and white. The pendant is strung on a necklace (*kanthi*) of pearls interspersed with emerald beads (not shown).

The gems are foiled and *kundan*-set in gold in a technique that is quintessentially Indian. The symmetrical arrangement of gems of different shapes and sizes to form a perfectly proportioned flower, the minute detailing on the gold, and the outstanding enamelling on the reverse are the hallmarks of this jewel. The emerald bead, weighing approximately 50 carats, completes the harmony of the composition. Tiny diamonds are used as fillers – a device employed in Indian jewellery to reduce the quantity of gold and to enhance the overall design.

The early 18th century dating of this pendant is based not only on the gem-set front, but also on the outstanding quality and colour of the enamelling on the reverse. The colours are very unusual – dark green and translucent green, together with navy blue, white and a minuscule golden yellow highlight in the middle. While Jaipur was the premier manufacturing centre in the 18th century, producing outstanding enamel work and *kundan*-set jewellery catering to courts all over India, Murshidabad, Lucknow and Hyderabad established their own distinctive enamel tradition. In the absence of precise information on provenance a definitive attribution cannot be made. While the continuity of Mughal aesthetics is conspicuous, the unique colour palette (departing from the ubiquitous red and green), the co-ordination of greens and blue and the bold treatment of the motifs, permits a Deccani attribution.[47] Similar pendants are clearly visible in portraits of the Nizams (page 47) and the Nawab of Arcot.

This jewel was assigned to Osman Ali Khan's fourth wife, Gowhar Begum, and is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Marvareed Kanval Almas Mai Padak

Gold set with diamonds, pearls, diamond beads and briolette diamond drops
India
Late 19th century
L: 29 cm  H (briolette drop): 2.8 cm
Weight: 214 gm
NJ 95.67

An extraordinary necklace (*kanthi*) centering upon a button pearl with diamond centre and surrounded with old-cut diamonds; two faceted diamond beads and a magnificent briolette diamond pendant below. The necklace alternating button pearls with diamond centres and surrounds suspending diamond beads, and old-cut diamonds graded to pear-shaped pearls in the rear ending in a Western-style clasp in lieu of traditional Indian tassels.

The gems are all in open-back claw settings in a design that is of European inspiration. The beauty and quality of the diamonds indicate that this was a commissioned jewel, made by a Delhi or Bombay jeweller in the late 19th century for Mahboob Ali Pasha. It was popular among the royals of India to employ local jewellers to execute designs in keeping with prevailing fashions in Europe or to order pieces from renowned European jewellery firms like Cartier, Chaumet and so on. While there are no records of the Nizam handing over his gems to be set by foreign firms, he was not averse to drawing upon his vast collection of stones and incorporating them into more contemporary settings.

The gradual gradation in size and colour that has been achieved in accordance with the design of the necklace could only have been done if the jeweller had a vast number of such gems, collected over a long period of time, to select from. Few jewellers in India had the resources to stock such a large quantity of matching gems. Thus, although the necklace appears to have been made only in the late 19th century, the diamonds display the lustre and luminosity characteristic of Golconda gems.

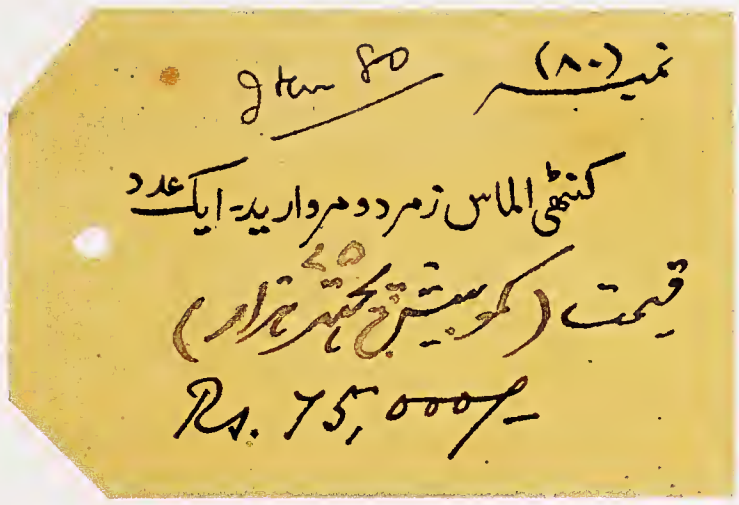
The large gold-coloured briolette diamond weighs approximately 130 carats; few other diamonds of this quality, combining colour, clarity and size are known. The pair of diamond beads on top of the briolette, are also golden in colour and weigh approximately 20 carats each. Each bead is perfectly round and drilled with great precision through the centre. To obtain a round diamond bead of 20 carats a rough stone of approximately 60 carats would have been required. The diamonds on either side of the necklace are graded, ranging in weight from 22 carats to 5 carats. The combined weight of these gems is estimated to be 150 carats. The intensity of the gold tint in the diamonds gradually decreases, getting lighter towards the rear. The button pearls are also graded, gradually reducing in size. They are of outstanding quality and their combined weight is in excess of 1,500 *chows*.

This necklace is one of the most important pieces in the collection after the Jacob diamond and the set of 22 Colombian emeralds. A group of six pearl buttons (NJ 95.121/1-6), similarly set with a diamond in the centre, was probably crafted at the same time and perhaps made to be worn with this necklace. The 1950 inventory label assigns a value of Rs 1,000,000 to the jewel and it is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Almas Zamarrud Wa Marvareed

Silver and gold set with an emerald, diamonds, emerald beads, emerald drops and pearls
Western India
19th century
L: 29.5 cm
Weight: 341 gm
NJ 95.80

An impressive *pachchikam* necklace (*kanthi*) with foiled table-cut diamonds, graduating from a large rectangular stone in the centre to smaller individually set pieces on either side, all strung with pearls and emerald beads and a fringe of emerald drops. The foliate pendant with a round cabochon emerald centre surrounded with a row of diamonds and diamond petals and emerald drops suspended below.




Though the origins of the *pachchikam* technique are not known, it was popular in Gujarat in the late 19th century. It seems to have had its roots in European design. Uncut diamonds and emeralds are encased in silver in the traditional *kundan* technique, but the edges of the encasement are grooved to simulate an open-claw setting. The reverse is plain gold (though in some jewels it is finely etched with floral motifs as seen in the necklace NJ 95.70). The sheer size and weight of the ornament implies that it was made for a man.

The Nizam's inventory (label at left) assigns a value of Rs 75,000 for the jewel. It is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Chintak Zamarrud

Gold set with emeralds, diamonds, emerald beads and emerald drops
Deccan
19th century
W: 7.5 cm L: 22 cm H (centre emerald): 3.3 cm
Weight: 159 gm
NJ 95.90

A necklace (*chintak*) in the form of a collar comprising graded rectangular panels, each set with a table-cut emerald surrounded with diamonds, tapering to pear-shaped emeralds, and surmounted with a row of emerald beads and a fringe of pear-shaped emeralds, emerald beads and emerald drops.

The 11 rectangular Colombian emeralds are all claw-set in gold in open-back mounts; the gold caps on the emerald drops are decorated with green enamel. The design of the necklace is typically Indian, common all over north India and popularly known as the *guluband*.

Like the Mughals, the Nizams had a great fondness for emeralds, apparent in the recurrence of the gem in so many jewels in the present collection. Emeralds came to India from Colombia, via the Portuguese trade, and found their way to the many provincial courts that were actively buying gems after the disintegration of the Mughal empire. As the premier native state of India, Hyderabad attracted dealers with the choicest stones.

Emeralds were coveted not only because of their rarity and unavailability in India but also for their properties in curing disease and instilling tranquillity. Due to their fiery green colour, they were regarded as symbols of the birth of spring.

Today, most emeralds are heat-treated to achieve the rich dark green colour coveted by buyers. Emeralds are rarely free of inclusions – the larger they are, the more visible these inclusions. To modern gemmologists, however, inclusions form the scientific data base to determine the precise area of origin of emeralds. Since the crystal growth of emeralds is hexagonal, most emeralds are table-cut, as evident in the gems set into this necklace.

The Nizams maintained a large harem in addition to the customary four wives permitted by Islamic law. Stylistically, the jewel dates to the mid-19th century and was perhaps made for one of Mahboob Ali Pasha's favourite wives. The necklace forms part of the jewels of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Padak Marvareed

Gold and silver set with diamonds, an emerald drop, pearls and emerald beads; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
19th century
L: 36 cm  Pendant – H: 9 cm  W: 5 cm
Weight: 118 gm
NJ 95.111

A pendant (*padak*) in an open-work foliate design with a square table-cut diamond in the centre, surrounded by foiled diamond lotus form clusters and an emerald drop capped with enamelled gold suspended. The reverse is enamelled in red and green on a white ground. The pendant is hung on a necklace of pearls and emerald beads.

The centre diamond is foiled and set in silver, to enhance the lustre of the gem, while all the other stones are *kundan*-set in gold. Combining silver and gold in the same jewel is characteristic of Deccani jewellery and served the purpose of providing an element of contrast as well. Pendants of this form are very common and are seen in portraits of the Nizams (page 47).

The pendant is part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Marvareed Wa Almas Wa Goshwara-i-Zamarrud Mai Padak Yakhoot

Silver and gold set with diamonds, a cabochon ruby, emerald drops, emerald beads and pearls
Western India
19th century
L: 30 cm  H (pendant): 10.5 cm
Weight: 370 gm
NJ 95.70

An impressive *pachchikam* graduated *champakali* necklace (*kanthi*) simulating the buds of the *Michelia champaca* flower. Each bud form set with a pear-shaped old-cut diamond, surmounted with a round diamond and a pearl and alternately suspending emerald drops and pearl drops. A foliate pendant with a round cabochon ruby within a circlet of small diamonds and surrounded with old-cut diamonds and an emerald drop suspended below.

The gems are set in front in the *pachchikam* technique whereby the uncut diamonds are foiled and encased in silver in the traditional *kundan* technique, but the edges of the encasement are grooved to simulate an open-claw setting. The reverse of each gem is encased in sheet gold finely etched with a delicate design of flowers and foliage. This necklace was evidently made for a man, as borne out by the sheer size and weight of the ornament.

The large round cabochon ruby in the centre is a beautiful gem of Burmese origin and weighs approximately 50 carats. The emerald drops and Basra pearls are of the finest quality and are capped with gold set with tiny diamonds. The emeralds together weigh more than 300 carats.

The *champakali* necklace is one of the oldest designs for neck ornaments in India. The delicate white buds and the heady scent of the flower epitomized purity and grace. Among the royals the *champakali* necklace was a symbol of their status and lineage, providing an opportunity to showcase large gems from the treasury.

This impressive example is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Almas Kanval Wa Parab

Gold set with diamonds
Western India
19th century
L: 23.6 cm
Weight: 357 gm
NJ 95.31

An extraordinary and unusual necklace (*kanthi*) of large flat table-cut diamonds alternating with small diamonds, graduating to smaller stones at the back and ending with a Western-style clasp. The centre gem with a pearl finial suspending a triangular diamond surrounded with small stones.

The gems are all claw-set but foiled in closed-back gold mounts. These mounts are clearly a late 19th century innovation, combining the traditional Indian technique of foiling – devised to simulate the effect of faceted brilliance in otherwise flat stones – and claw-setting in order to enhance the size of the gems. In jewellery terminology, this is known as *pachu* setting. The weight of the 12 large diamonds is estimated to be approximately 250 carats.

The simplicity of the design is deliberate, intended to merely provide a framework for the large gems. Flat diamonds of this size and quality are not only unusual but extremely rare. Immense quantities of flat diamonds were used in traditional Mughal-style jewellery. Their availability was a direct consequence of the method of mining employed in India. Crowbars were used to dislodge the rocks which were then further broken up with hard blows. This resulted in the fracture of many gem-quality rough stones. But, always sensitive to the value of diamonds, such stones, known as *parabs*, were never discarded. The versatile Indian craftsman merely faceted them around the edges to enhance their brilliance and devised designs and settings that cleverly utilised these stones. The vast quantities of such gems that were effectively used in the jewels of royalty in India is itself indicative of the high esteem in which they were held. In the 18th century, workshops where such faceting was done were located in Lucknow and Benares.

This necklace is part of a suite of jewels of similar design and workmanship – a pair of bracelets (NJ 95.52/1-2) and a set of buttons (NJ 95.8/1-6). They were obviously all made at the same time and by the same manufacturer. A photograph of Mir Osman Ali Khan shows him wearing this necklace (page 48).

The jewel is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Padak Almas Neem Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
19th century
H: 7.5 cm W: 6.4 cm
Weight: 65 gm
NJ 95.16

An open-work foliate pendant (*padak*) set with large table-cut diamonds and interspersed with small diamonds. A large emerald drop, now missing, was originally suspended below.

The nine diamonds of impressive size are all claw-set, but the area immediately beneath the gems is partially encased in gold to create the impression of depth. Though this pendant is slightly smaller, it is practically identical to another piece in the collection (below). This jewel is among the numerous items assigned to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Padak Almas Wa Goshwara-i-Zamarrud

Gold set with diamonds and an emerald drop
Deccan
19th century
H: 13 cm W: 6.5 cm Emerald drop – H: 4.7 cm W: 3 cm
Weight: 107 gm
NJ 95.9

An open-work foliate pendant (*padak*) set with large table-cut diamonds and interspersed with small diamonds; an emerald drop suspended below.

The nine large diamonds are all claw-set in gold but instead of a completely open-back mount, favoured by jewellers in the late 19th century, the gems are partially encased in gold to impart the impression of depth to the flat table-cut stones. The large emerald drop measures an impressive 4.7 cm in length and weighs in excess of 225 carats. The drop is suspended from a gold cap embellished with red enamel. This piece is similar to another (above) and forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Dholna Almas Wa Mothi

Diamond beads strung with pearls
Hyderabad
19th century
L: 23 cm
Weight: 93 gm
NJ 95.108

A necklace (*kanthi*) comprising three rows of pearls interspersed with faceted diamond beads and a centre *taveez*-shaped diamond bead. The 57 beads are estimated to weigh approximately 220 carats, while the centre bead alone weighs about 20 carats. The beads are drilled through from side to side and threaded on a string.

From time immemorial, beads have had the most potent amuletic properties. Octagonal and gourd-shaped beads such as the ones used in this necklace were all fashioned from near-spherical shapes and covered with tiny facets all over the surface. Since the shape of these diamond beads is similar to that of the amulets worn by people in all parts of India, irrespective of caste, creed or region to ward off bad luck, they are commonly known as *taveez* or amulet shaped.[48]

Rows of pearls with diamond *taveez*-drops were draped around the turban together with the customary *sarpech* and *turra*, as seen in a famous photograph of the Maharaja of Patiala dating to about 1930.[49] The present example was perhaps also once used in a similar fashion. However, it has been re-threaded as a necklace in more recent times, as seen in a photograph of Mir Osman Ali Khan (page 49). In the collection, a watch-chain (NJ 95.19) features similarly faceted diamond beads and pearls. This necklace is among the group of jewels assigned to the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Jugni Marvareed

Gold set with diamonds and an emerald drop, with pearls and emerald beads; enamelled on the front and reverse
Deccan
18th century
L: 21 cm  Pendant – H (including emerald drop): 6.5 cm  W: 2.6 cm
Weight: 117 gm
NJ 95.147

A pendant (*jugni*) of pear-shaped form with a diamond set within a foiled enamelled surround and diamond-set foliate surmount, and an emerald drop capped with enamelled gold. The piece is strung on a necklace of emerald beads and pearls. The reverse is polychrome enamelled with floral motifs in red, green, white and powder blue.

The large gem in the centre, which is estimated to weigh approximately 12 carats, is foiled and set in a traditional *kundan* gold setting. The gold work is of very fine quality and the colour and quality of the enamel work on the back permits an early dating.[50] Family portraits of the Nizams, especially those of children, reveal that this kind of jewel was very popular and obviously made for practically everybody. The black and white photograph of the jewels also establishes this fact. This piece was allocated to Gowhar Begum, while another practically identical one in the collection (facing page) was assigned to Ekbal Begum.

The jewel is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Jugni Marvareed

Gold set with diamonds and an emerald drop, with pearls and emerald beads; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
L: 19 cm  Pendant – H (including emerald drop): 4 cm  W: 2.3 cm
Weight: 120 gm
NJ 95.123

A pendant (*jugni*) in a pear-shaped design with a trefoil surmount set with foiled diamonds and an enamelled gold-capped emerald drop pendant. The reverse is enamelled in green on a gold ground.

The foiled table-cut diamonds are *kundan*-set in gold, the large gem weighing more than 12 carats. The reverse is decorated with a flowering plant motif minutely rendered in monochrome green enamel known as *partajikam*. Such work was done in centres as far apart as Rajasthan and Benares in the 18th century, but the Deccan appears to have excelled in the technique, as is evident from some of the superb examples in the present collection (NJ 95.124) and in other examples also attributed to the Deccan.[51]

Large quantities of similar pendants were obviously made for the Nizam's family, judging from photographs dating back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries (pages 53 and 65). The present example appears to be finer and of an earlier date, considering the size and quality of the diamond in the centre, the setting and the enamelling. This piece was assigned to Ekbal Begum and is strung on 7 rows of pearls. Another similar one in the present collection (facing page) is of slightly later date.

The piece belongs to the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chintak Murassa

Gold set with diamonds, pearls and emerald drops; enamelled on the front and the reverse.
Deccan
19th century
W (including pearls and beads): 7 cm  L: 25 cm  Each panel: 2 x 2 cm
Weight: 289 gm
NJ 95.122

A necklace (*chintak*) of square panels, each set with diamonds in a flower form with green enamel in between, suspending a fringe of pear-shaped foiled diamonds, pearls and emerald drops. A row of pearls on either side of the plaques links the individual pieces. The reverse is polychrome enamelled.

The diamonds are all foiled, table-cut and *kundan*-set in gold. The green enamel on the front is in harmony with the green colour of the emerald drops along the edge. The reverse is enamelled with floral motifs in red, green, powder blue and white, in a palette that is typically Deccani. Each small diamond pendant drop is also enamelled with a single red flower and green leaves.

Such neck-hugging necklaces known as *guluband* in north India are quintessentially feminine jewels. There are several examples in the present collection. This piece was assigned to Ekbal Begum Mir Osman Ali Khan's third wife, in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chintak Murassa

Gold set with diamonds, pearls and emerald drops; enamelled on the front and the reverse
Deccan
19th century
W: 7 cm  L: 26 cm
Weight: 288 gm
NJ 95.146

A necklace (*chintak*) in the form of 11 square panels, each set with a large diamond in the centre and diamonds in each corner making a flower form with green enamel in between, ending in pear-shaped pieces on either side, suspending a fringe of diamond set drops, pearls and emerald drops. A row of pearls on either side of the plaques links the individual pieces. The reverse is polychrome enamelled.

The foiled flat diamonds are all *kundan*-set in gold in this typically Deccani jewel, which was popular in the Nizam's household, judging by the number of very similar pieces in the collection. The reverse is enamelled with red flowers and green leaves on a white ground, with a thin border of powder blue enamel around the edge of the squares. Each pear-shaped drop is also delicately enamelled with an individual red flower with green leaves. The quality of workmanship in this example is finer than another similar necklace (facing page) suggesting a different craftsman perhaps. The Nizam appears to have been very fair in distribution of jewellery, since both Osman's fourth wife, Gowhar Begum (to whom this piece was assigned) and his third wife Ekbal Begum were allocated practically identical sets of jewels. This piece forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chintak Neelum

Gold set with diamonds, sapphires, sapphire drops, and pearls
Deccan
Early 20th century
W: 6.5 cm  L: 27 cm
Weight: 276 gm
NJ 95.107

A collar-hugging necklace (*chintak*) in the form of 15 rectangular panels, each set with an oval table-cut sapphire in the middle surrounded with small diamonds, suspending a fringe of sapphires, pearls and sapphire drops. A border of pearls is threaded on either side of the plaques.

The sapphires and diamonds are all claw-set in open-back mounts in a modern setting. The light mauvish-blue of the sapphires indicates that they are probably from the Sri Lankan mines, although sapphires from Kashmir were of the best quality and in great demand in the Indian gem bazaars. The collar-style necklace known as *chintak* in the Deccan was made in large numbers, only the gems and elements of design varying. They are all in the form of individual plaques strung together to make up the necklace. Other similar pieces in the present collection are the emerald necklace (NJ 95.90) and the diamond collar necklace (NJ 95.91).

The sapphire is rarely used in traditional Indian jewellery. Even jewellers are reluctant to handle this stone associated with the powerful planet Saturn. Although no such fears are known in Islamic belief, it was not commonly used even in the Mughal courts. This rare example was obviously made in the early 20th century, perhaps specially commissioned for a favourite wife. It belongs to the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

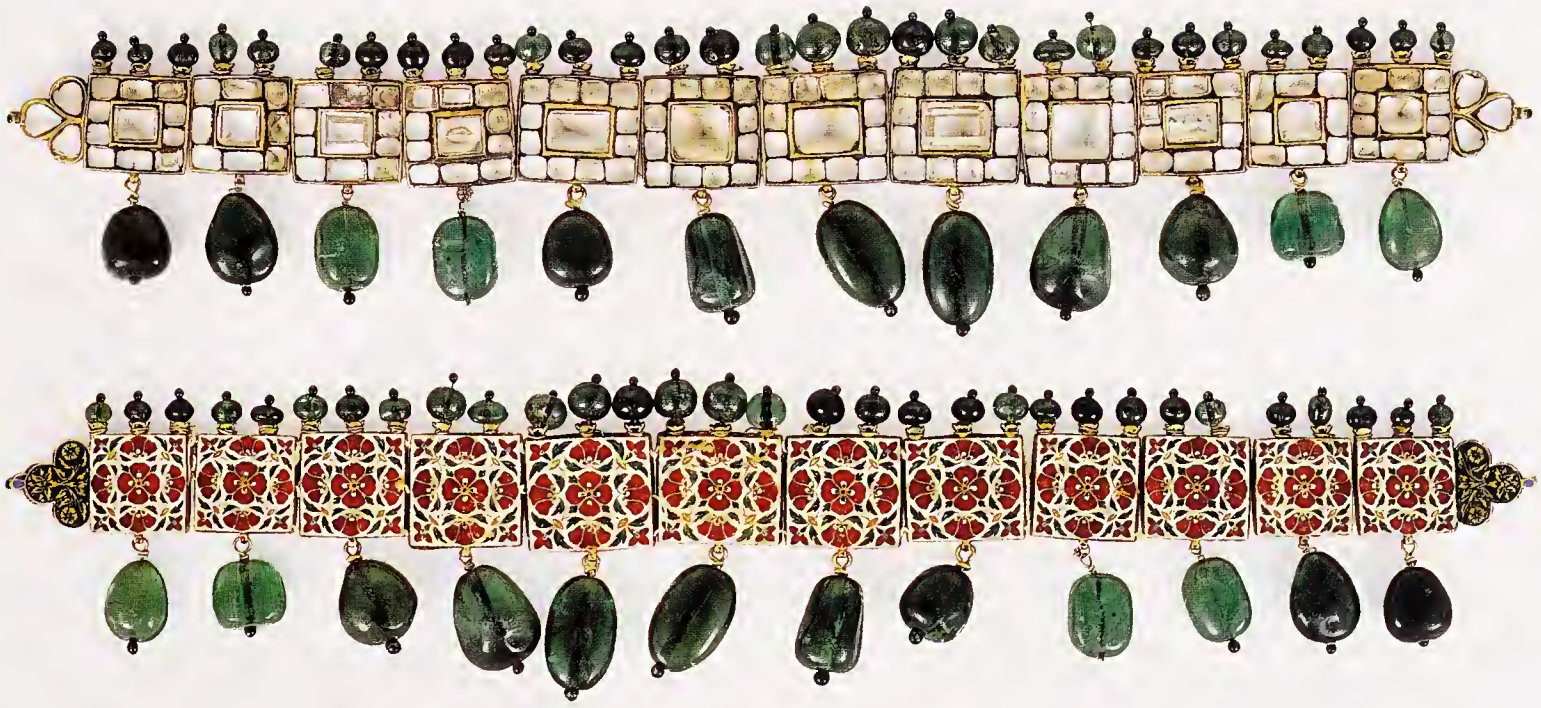
## Chintak Parab Wa Zamarrud

Gold set with diamonds, emerald beads and emerald drops; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
W (including emerald beads and drops): 7 cm  L: 34.5 cm
Weight: 292 gm
NJ 95.93

A necklace (*chintak*) of square panels set with diamonds in a square arrangement, each plaque suspending an emerald drop and surmounted with emerald beads. The reverse polychrome enamelled.

The foiled table-cut diamonds are all *kundan*-set in gold. The 12 panels, each measuring 2 x 2 cm, are set with large diamonds in the centre, totally weighing approximately 40 carats and surrounded with smaller foiled diamonds. The emerald drops along the lower edge are estimated to weigh approximately 250 carats and are of uniformly fine quality and a deep green colour.

The enamelled design of red flowers, green foliage and yellow highlights on a white ground on the reverse is minutely detailed and of exceptional quality, permitting an early dating to the jewel. Such necklaces were specially made for women of the family, and this piece perhaps belonged to a wife of the third Nizam, Sikandar Jah. It is part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.



## Har Murassa

Silver and gold set with diamonds and emerald drops; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
L: 62 cm
Weight: 817 gm
NJ 95.78

A necklace (*har*) comprising lotus flower form plaques set with foiled diamonds interspersed with pearls and emerald beads pendant on both sides, suspending a large foliate diamond cluster pendant suspending an emerald drop and surmounted with a stylized bow-shaped element suspending emerald drops. The reverse is polychrome enamelled.

The jewel represents a fusion of Mughal and Deccani idioms manifest in form, material and technique. The 219 table-cut diamonds are all foiled but set in silver in the front, while the reverse is encased with gold to permit the rendering of the full range of enamel colours. The use of silver in jewellery was perfectly acceptable in the Nizam's court, contrary to the common perception that only poor people used silver.[52] Lucknow jewellers who specialized in this technique most likely introduced it.

The design of the jewel is typically south Indian, derived from the classical *makarakanthi* necklaces of the region. Each of the lotus plaques that make up the necklace are also distinctly of south Indian origin. The enamel on the reverse, of minutely rendered red flowers with green leaves on a white ground, is of fine quality, on par with Rajasthani enamelling of the period, indicating that first-rate work was being done in the Deccan in this time.

This impressive and heavy necklace was worn by Osman at his wedding (page 55). Such jewels are also prominently visible in photographs of Hyderabadi noblemen.[53] Made in large quantities and held in the special treasury, they were perhaps gifted by the Nizam to nobles whom he wished to honour. Another similar jewel forms part of the collection (facing page). The Nizam's inventory records a value of Rs 25,000 for the jewel and it is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Har Murassa

Gold set with diamonds, cabochon rubies, emerald drops and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
19th century
L: 52 cm
Weight: 472 gm
NJ 95.110

A necklace (*har*) comprising a central open-work foliate diamond cluster pendant with an emerald bead suspended at the bottom and surmounted by a stylized element set with diamonds and emerald beads with minuscule gold-set cabochon ruby caps. On either side, the necklace is composed of lotus flower form plaques set with foiled diamonds interspersed with pearls and emerald beads on both sides. The reverse is polychrome enamelled.

The present example is identical to another necklace (facing page). The gems are *kundan*-set in silver and the reverse is in gold enamelled with minute red and green floral motifs on a white ground. Indigenous jewellery forms not only survived the all-pervading Mughal influence in this period, but were amalgamated to produce uniquely Deccani ornaments. It is part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Hansli Parab Mai Aweeza Zamarrud

Gold set with diamonds and emerald drops; enamelled on the front and reverse
Deccan
19th century
L: 23 cm W: 19 cm
Weight: 310 gm
NJ 95.103

A necklace (*hansli*) in the form of a rigid circular collar with an open-work trellis design set with foiled diamonds in foliate clusters and a row of emerald drops suspended below, tapering to a single row of diamonds in the rear ending with a stylized screw opening. The reverse polychrome enamelled.

The 13 large table-cut diamonds are all foiled and *kundan*-set in gold, and are surrounded by 110 small gems. The emerald drops are also graded – the centre drop is 3.5 cm long. The tapering rear portion of the necklace is enamelled in front with green on gold, while the reverse is rendered with floral motifs in red and green on a white ground. While the form of this necklace is quintessentially Rajasthani – its name *hansli* derived from the collar bone (*hansuli*) on which such ornaments rest – this particular example appears to have been made in the Hyderabad workshops.

The jewel rests in a special case and is part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chintak Parab Wa Marvareed

Gold and silver set with diamonds, pearls and emerald beads; enamelled on the front and the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
W: 8 cm L: 24.5 cm
Weight: 277 gm
NJ 95.92

A necklace (*chintak*) of square panels, each set with foiled diamonds within a green enamel surround with a fringe of pear-shaped diamond drops, pearls and emerald drops and surmounted with a row of pearls set in gold cups. The front and the reverse are polychrome enamelled.

The jewel combines gold and silver setting – a typical Deccani feature. The large table-cut diamonds in each panel are all *kundan*-set in silver and weigh more than 80 carats. The small pear-shaped diamond pendants are also in silver. The back is in gold, since enamelling requires gold of the finest quality. The medley of delicate flowers in red and green on a white ground is extremely fine and detailed, while each pendant piece is also enamelled with a minute red flower and green leaves.

The small length of the jewel suggests that it was made for a child. A photograph of Mahboob Ali Pasha's daughter (page 65) shows her wearing this necklace. A favourite child of the Nizam, she died at a very young age. The jewel is part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Padak Larli Wa Almas

Gold set with diamonds, a spinel and a spinel drop
Deccan
Late 19th century
H: 12 cm W: 6 cm
Weight: 80 gm
NJ 95.44

A pendant (*padak*) in an open-work floral design with a pear-shaped spinel in the centre surrounded with diamond clusters and a row of diamonds around the outer edge with a diamond capped carved spinel drop suspended.

The centre spinel and the outer border of 14 large diamonds are claw-set in gold cups while the smaller gems are set in traditional gold mounts.

The quality of the spinel bead is poor and the carving very rough. Such flower blossom shaped pendants are common and were obviously made in large quantities for the vast number of women who lived cloistered in the royal harem.

The ornament was apparently of sentimental value to Osman Ali Khan, who included it in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Padak Zamarrud

Gold set with emeralds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
H: 6.5 cm W: 6 cm Centre emerald: 2.5 x 2.5 cm
Weight: 57 gm
NJ 95.55

A pendant (*padak*) in an open-work foliate design with a square emerald in the centre and emeralds in octagonal frames on each side with leaf-shaped gem-set connectors in the corners. The reverse of the jewel is enamelled in red.

The large centre gem is reputed to weigh approximately 40 carats, while the combined weight of the surrounding eight emeralds is about 47 carats. Minute examination of the emeralds reveals that the stones have been used in earlier settings, prior to being adapted to this jewel. This was a common practice in India even among royalty. Since the intrinsic value of an ornament lay in the gems, it was perfectly acceptable to recycle stones into new settings in accordance with changing fashions and tastes. The four large gems around the centre square emerald were once used as buttons (they have holes pierced through them). Most likely, they were stitched directly onto a coat or jacket.

Stylistically, this pendant is part of a suite of jewels that includes several turban ornaments and armbands in the present collection.[54] The pendant is among the jewels allocated to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Teen Larh Marvareed

Three rows of pearls; the clasp in gold set with one button pearl
India
19th century
L: 27 cm
Weight: 179 gm
NJ 95.51

A necklace comprising three rows (*teen larh*) of round graded pearls, each row ending in a drop-shaped pearl, the three rows merged into one with two pearls and ending in a Western-style button pearl clasp.

The necklace is composed of 165 Basra pearls of exceptional quality and size, perfectly matched for colour and lustre and carefully selected to achieve a very subtle gradation. The pearls, like perfectly round drops of dew, make this necklace unique.

Romantic myths abound on the origin of pearls from divine dew in every culture. Sa'di, a Persian poet who lived in the 13th century, recorded one such fable in his *Bustan* (Fruit Garden): "A drop of water fell one day from a cloud into the sea. Ashamed and confounded on finding itself in such an immensity of water, it exclaimed, 'What am I in comparison with this vast ocean? My existence is less than nothing in this boundless abyss.' While it thus discoursed of itself, a Pearl-shell received it into its bosom, and fortune so favoured it, that it became a magnificent and precious pearl, worthy of adorning the diadem of kings. Thus was its humility the cause of its elevation, and by annihilating itself it merited exaltation."[55]

In the 1950 inventory, a princely sum of "more or less Rs. 700,000" has been assigned to this beautiful necklace. It forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Chintak Parab

Gold set with diamonds and pearls
North India
Late 19th century
W (including pearls): 7.5 cm  L: 26 cm
Weight: 216 cm
NJ 95.91

A necklace (*chintak*) in the form of a row of square panels set with diamonds, ending with pear-shaped pieces on either side and a fringe of diamonds and pearls. A row of pearls, each set in a gold cup, borders the top of the ornament.

This jewel combines traditional Indian techniques with newly introduced Western methods of setting gems in lightweight mounts. While the large centre diamonds in each panel are all enclosed in gold, the surrounding diamonds are in open-back claw settings. The necklace is composed of no fewer than 241 flat and old-cut diamonds. All the pearl drops along the lower edge are capped with red enamelled gold and are estimated to weigh more than 2,000 *chows*. The collar necklace is similar to other pieces in the collection[56] and rests in its own original blue velvet case specially designed to protect the gems and cushion the pearls.

It is part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Taveez Choti Jaravi Larha Marvareed

Gold set with diamonds, with pearls; enamelled around the sides
Deccan
Late 18th century
L: 38 cm  Pendant – H (including ring on top): 7 cm  W: 5 cm
Weight: 203 gm
NJ 95.125

An amulet (*taveez*) pendant of square double-sided open-work form, in a trellis work design, both sides set with a large round flat diamond in the centre and surrounded by foliage, each leaf set with a diamond, with a gem-set loop above. The sides are enamelled with red flowers and green leaves on a white ground. The pendant strung on pearls (not shown).

Although this jewel is smaller than the one below, there are no fewer than 72 flat diamonds *kundan*-set in gold on both sides. Such pendants were used as amulets, the square form intended to simulate a box in which scriptural verses or good luck charms were kept.[57] This piece was assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Taveez Choti Mai Char Larha Marvareed

Gold set with diamonds, with pearls; enamelled around the sides
Deccan
Late 18th century
L: 36 cm  Pendant – H (including ring on top): 7.5 cm  W: 5 cm
Weight: 186 gm
NJ 95.149

An amulet (*taveez*) pendant of square double-sided open-work form, both sides set with a large flat table-cut diamond at the centre surrounded by two bands of foliage, the leaves set with diamonds and a diamond set loop above. The sides are enamelled with red and green meandering flowers on a fragmentary white ground. The pendant is strung on four rows of pearls.

Square pendants such as these simulated amulet boxes intended to hold verses from the scriptures and were worn to deflect the evil-eye.[58] The workmanship of the jewel is extremely fine and detailed. The setting of the central octagonal-shaped flat diamond within a faceted receptacle lends depth and dimension to the jewel. The piece is part of the collection of jewels set aside for Gowhar Begum and its form is similar to another assigned to Ekbal Begum (above). The pendant is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kantah Marvareed

Pearls and emerald beads
Deccan
19th century
L: 17.5 cm
Weight: 137 gm
NJ 95.112

A necklace (*kantah*) comprising eight rows of Basra pearls of exceptional luminosity and colour with a large emerald bead flanked by two pearls strung on gold wire in the centre, and emerald bead terminals. The pearls weigh more than 400 *chows*.

To Indian rulers from time immemorial the allure of pearls was irresistible. They were the only pure gems of nature, requiring no cutting or polishing to enhance their natural beauty. History, art and literature testify that pearls were the most prolifically used of all gems in Indian jewellery. While sculptures of gods and goddesses are all adorned with jewels strung with pearls, and miniature paintings illustrate the passion for the gem, literature is also replete with references to the vast quantities of pearls that were used in ornaments. During the Mughal period, pearls were in great demand and vast amounts were bought by the emperors. The breathtaking enumeration of Jahangir's imperial treasury by William Hawkins in 1611 records that there was no less than 300 kilos or 1.5 million carats of pearls. Minature paintings depicting the Mughal kings indicate that jewels combining pearls and emerald beads were integral to their attire. Similarly, early photographs of the Nizam's family point to the endurance of the passion. In an early picture of Mahboob Ali Pasha's young daughter (page 65), the child is shown with row upon row of pearls interspersed with emerald beads and hung with pendants cascading down her chest.

The present collection corroborates the indispensability of the gem in traditional jewellery. In the beginning of the 20th century, in the European and American markets, pearls were in such great demand, "with prices being paid which almost seemed in the realm of fantasy."[59] It was at this time, that Mahboob is said to have enlisted the assistance of a close aide in grading his vast collection of pearls: "...they went to the treasury and there they pulled out buckets and buckets and buckets of pearls of all shapes and sizes. First they washed them all in boric acid and then they poured them through these grading machines like you use for grading gravel, so that they were sorted out according to size. Then they were laid out to dry on huge sheets on the roof, covering the entire roof of the palace."[60]

The jewel is part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

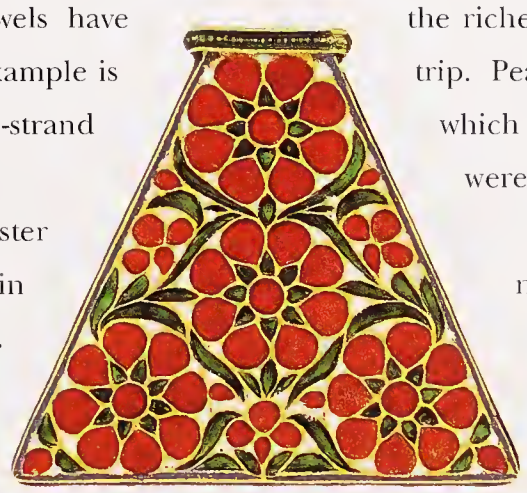
## Saath Larh Marvareed Kalan Almas Samosa Parab

Seven rows of pearls with terminals in gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Terminals: 19th century
L: 37 cm
Weight: 714 gm
NJ 95.1

A magnificent necklace comprising seven rows (*saath larh*) of graded Basra pearls ending in triangular terminals *kundan*-set in gold with a large foiled table-cut diamond in the centre within a cluster of smaller diamonds in the front. The reverse is enamelled with red flowers and green foliage on a white ground. The simplicity of the enamel work – four eight-petalled flowers perfectly positioned within the space with fillers of leaves and smaller flowers – is striking and typical of the Deccan.

The 465 pearls that make up this necklace all display a wonderful lustre – a combination of bright surface brilliance and a deep-seated glow. Such necklaces were the ultimate symbol of royalty in India. In a photograph of Mahboob Ali Pasha's favourite daughter (page 65), the young child can be seen wearing this piece, or one that is very similar to it. This necklace of perfectly matched and graded pearls rivals the renowned seven-strand pearl necklace once in the possession of Khande Rao, the Gaekwad of Baroda (r. 1856-70).[61] The Gaekwad's pearl necklace was considered to be the single most valuable item of jewellery in the Baroda collection, rivalling even the magnificent diamonds – Star of the South and English Dresden. While those jewels have long since vanished, the present example is perhaps the lone surviving seven-strand necklace of Basra pearls.

For many centuries the oyster beds of the Persian Gulf off Bahrain yielded the most magnificent pearls. Until the 16th century, Arabs and Persians controlled the fisheries and trade in pearls. In the 16th century, the region was colonized by the Portuguese (who also controlled the fisheries in India) and pearls formed an important component of their Far East trade. After the Arabs took control of the region, not only the fishing, but the pearl trade also was dominated by Arabs and Indian financiers called *banias*. Once cleaned and sorted, the pearls were sent to the city of Hormuz in Iran. "There, merchants from India bought them at auction, acquiring batches of gems from each bunnia. The Indian merchants took their purchases to the great pearl markets of Bombay"[62] where they were sorted, graded and priced before being sold to jewellers from all around the world. Thus, Bombay became the principal pearl trading centre, even for gems bound for Europe. In the early 20th century, the trade in Bombay was monopolised by two Arab dealers, Abdul Rahman and Sheikh Jassim. European dealers either set up business in the city or conducted deals through designated intermediaries. Mr Sethna, Bombay representative for Cartier's, "frequently arranged for pearls to be forwarded to Europe."[63] From Bombay to Hyderabad, the richest native state in India, was a short trip. Pearl dealers flocked to Hyderabad, which emerged as the centre where pearls were bored and polished.



Befitting its importance, the necklace is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Zanjeer Almas

Gold set with diamonds on both sides; enamelled on the edges
Deccan
Early 18th century
L: 53 cm
Weight: 260 gm
NJ 95.133

A strikingly simple two-sided chain (*zanjeer*) with two rows of pear-shaped panels *kundan*-set in gold with foiled flat diamonds on both sides, the panels linked with tiny gold loops, ending in triangular terminals and a flat double line woven gold chain in the back. The edges of the panels decorated with red enamel.

This necklace is set with 316 flat diamonds. Although it is smaller than the piece shown on the facing page, the workmanship reveals the same attention to detail and finish. Mir Osman Ali Khan allocated an equal number of jewels to his third and fourth wives, Ekbal Begum and Gowhar Begum in the trust. These jewels comprising feminine ornaments such as necklaces, earrings, bangles, rings and toe rings are practically identical in design, quality and value. This necklace forms part of the jewels assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Zanjeer Almas

Gold set with diamonds on both sides; enamelled on the edges
Deccan
Early 18th century
L: 54.5 cm
Weight: 266 gm
NJ 95.162

An elegant two-sided chain (*zanjeer*) comprising two rows of pear-shaped gold panels, each set with a foiled flat diamond on both sides and attached with minuscule gold links, ending in triangular terminals and a flat woven double gold chain at the back. Red enamel embellishes the edges of the panels.

The chain is *kundan*-set on the front and the reverse with a total of 380 diamonds. This finely crafted jewel is one of the early items in the collection, tracing its provenance to the Adil Shahi court of Bijapur.[64] Another necklace in the collection featured on the facing page is practically identical. This strikingly simple jewel is one of the few surviving examples of the indigenous Deccani idiom. It is among the group of ornaments assigned to Gowhar Begum and forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Saheli Moti Panch Larhi Wa Saath Tukdi Yakhoot Wa Almas

Gold set with diamonds and rubies, with pearls
India
Early 20th century
L: 84 cm
Weight: 503 gm
NJ 95.38

A necklace comprising seven hexagonal panels (*tukdi*) with rubies and diamonds in an open-work setting, the centre-piece with a tassel of pearls suspended on five rows (*larhi*) of pearls with ruby bead spacers.

The design and setting of the panels are relatively modern, the 84 rubies and 112 diamonds set *a jour* in open-back claw settings. The panels were most likely made some time in the early 20th century. The rubies appear to be of Burmese origin, although in this period gems from Thailand were also available in the Indian market. However, the form of the necklace is typically Hyderabadi, designed to simulate a garland of flowers. The pearls are graded between each panel from large ones in the centre tapering to smaller ones on both sides. The weight of the pearls is in excess of 3,000 *chows*.

Long garland necklaces, such as this one, inspired European designers and jewellers like Cartier and Chaumet, who replicated and adapted them to Western jewellery.

In the early 19th century, *sautoirs* – some of them coming down to the hips – became fashionable in Europe. These long necklaces were set with spectacular precious gems or were in the form of mulitple rows of pearls with tassel pendants surmounted with diamonds and carved emeralds.

The Nizams had a passion for pearls and precious stones. Loose pearls, spinel beads and emerald beads were not only set into ornaments but used for a variety of purposes – sewn on to coats, sarees, caps and prayer rugs; set into the handles of daggers, swords and sheaths; and used to decorate boxes and other functional accoutrements.

A pair of bracelets (NJ 95.43/1-2) is similar in design and workmanship to this necklace. These jewels were perhaps made at the same time, probably for Mir Osman Ali Khan's wedding. In the inventory of 1950 this jewel was assigned a value of Rs 200,000. They are among the jewels included by Mir Osman Ali Khan in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kanthi Goshwara-i-Marvareed Wa Almas

Gold set with diamonds, pearls, emerald beads and emerald drops
Deccan
Late 19th century
L: 19 cm
Weight: 222 gm
NJ 95.2

A necklace (*kanthi*) of graded emerald drops, each capped with diamonds set in gold, surmounted with a round diamond and a pearl finial set in a gold cup, strung on fine gold wire interspersed with emerald beads. The 24 emerald drops simulate a stylized version of the *champakali* (*Michelia champaca*) necklace.

The most common use of emeralds in Indian jewellery is as beads. Rough gems were imported from Colombia and every effort was made to retain maximum weight and size. As a result unnecessary cutting and faceting was avoided. Large quantities of gems were tumble polished, drilled and used as drops with the addition of an enamelled or gem-set gold cap. As a result, the beads are often in irregular shapes and sizes. The beautiful gradation of size, the deep green colour and high quality of the stones used in this necklace are testimony to the vast quantities of loose gems held by the Nizams. The jewel is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Padak Almas Kanval

Gold and silver set with diamonds and rubies; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan or Lucknow
18th century
H: 9 cm W: 8 cm
Weight: 95 gm
NJ 95.71

A beautiful pendant (*padak*) in an open-work flower-head design with a large foiled table-cut diamond in the centre, two rows of diamond petal surrounds and surmounted by two gem-set birds with ruby beaks. The reverse is in polychrome enamel.

The 35 old-cut diamonds are all foiled and set in silver to enhance their brilliance. The centre stone is claw-set to emphasize its size while the surrounding stones are all *kundan*-set in the front. The reverse is in gold and finely enamelled with bird and flower motifs in red, green, white and navy blue with powder blue highlights. The enamelling on the back of the birds delineates the feathers, eyes and beak.

The fusion of silver and gold in the present jewel and the enamel colours on the reverse makes it impossible to determine whether it was made in the Deccan or in Lucknow, or even by Lucknow craftsmen working in the Asaf Jah court. Pendants incorporating bird forms are found in north Indian and south Indian jewels. However, judging from the size and quality of the diamonds and the virtuosity of the workmanship, it was made by a master jeweller who had access to a fine collection of gems.

The inventory of 1950 assigns a value of Rs 50,000 for the jewel. It forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

# Belts and Buckles

## Baglus Almas Kanval Patta Tilai

Gold set with diamonds
India
19th century
Buckle – W: 13.6 cm
Weight: 979 gm
NJ 95.33

A spectacular belt (*patta tilai*), the front in the form of a lacey open-work diamond-encrusted panel set with white and golden coloured diamonds. The buckle (*baglus*) in three hinged sections with an oval medallion centering upon a large old-cut diamond surrounded with round, oval and pear-shaped gems and a riot of paisley motifs, each with a pear-shaped diamond in the middle and outlined with a row of diamonds; flanked on either side with sections in the form of lotus flowers outlined with diamonds, a large pear-shaped gem in the centre and paisleys on either side. The open-work design of paisleys amidst foliage set with golden-coloured gems is extended in the form of a long band on both sides of the buckle bordered with a row of smaller gems. The back of the belt is a broad band of gold made up of alternating twisted and plain gold wires.

This breathtaking belt is fashioned from gold with over 245 major oval, round and pear-shaped diamonds and an infinite number of tiny gems whose total weight is in excess of 640 carats. The gems are all claw-set in open-back settings. The design details are outlined with fine, coiled gold wires which serve the dual purpose of bringing into relief the size and quality of the golden-hued diamonds and also lending a touch of refined elegance to the design. Pear-shaped and oval stones ideally suited to the paisley design predominate.

Although a precise attribution to an area of manufacture or even a particular maker is very difficult, the belt is a fusion of Western and Indian elements characteristic in quite a few items in the collection. While the claw setting and lightweight mounts in lieu of the traditional *kundan* setting are techniques of Western origin, design elements such as the paisley and lotus are unequivocally Indian – their inspiration most likely drawn from textiles of the period. The practice of outlining design motifs with coiled gold wires is frequently encountered in jewels made in south India.

Jewellers in Hyderabad recollect stories that a European craftsman was once attached to the Asaf Jah court during the time of Mahboob Ali Pasha and suggest that this impressive accessory to royal attire might be the work of a foreign craftsman. However, Indian workmen were no less capable of executing such a unique commission.

The origin of the gems that have been brought together in this jewel is indisputably the diamond fields of Golconda. The mines, reputed to have pumped more than 12,000,000 carats of diamonds into the world, had been reduced to a trickle by the time Mahboob Ali Pasha ascended the throne of Hyderabad. But by this time, in the late 19th century, the Hyderabad treasury was already stocked with an unrivalled collection of Golconda gems. The stones have been carefully selected and matched for colour, size and quality as the design dictated. The pearl necklace (NJ 95.67) is similarly fashioned with golden-coloured diamonds.

The belt has been assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Navaratna Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with the nine planetary gems, rubies and diamonds
India
Late 19th century
Diam: 8 cm
Weight: 122 gm
NJ 95.48

An unusual buckle (*baglus*) in a circular open-work foliate form set with the nine auspicious planetary gems (*navaratna*) with a large cat's eye in the centre surrounded with diamonds and – clockwise from the top – an emerald, coral, pearl, peridot, ruby, sapphire, diamond and zircon. An old-cut diamond is positioned between each gem, surmounted with scallops of rubies and linked with *fleur-de-lis* motifs set with small diamonds.

The large gems are all set in claws in open-back mounts, while the small diamonds and rubies that link the gems are in *a jour* settings typical of the late 19th century. The size and quality of the gems indicate the importance of the jewel.

The combination of the nine planetary gems (representing seven planets and the ascending and descending nodes of the moon) was a powerful Hindu amulet functioning as a shield against the harmful effects of planetary influences. In the traditional circular arrangement of the nine gems in a jewel, the ruby representing the sun or the centre of the universe is placed in the middle and the surrounding gems are usually of the same size and quality to create a perfectly harmonized amulet. The irregularity seen in this example, where a magnificent cat's eye occupies the centre, is probably due to lack of knowledge by the maker or is a concession to the Islamic belief of the wearer who governed a kingdom of predominantly Hindu subjects. An armband in the collection (NJ 95.73/1-2) is also set with the nine planetary gems in a linear arrangement.

The Nizam's inventory of 1950 assigns a value of Rs 400,000 to the buckle. It is included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Wa Kanval Almas Wa Yakhoot

Gold set with rubies and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Buckle – Diam: 5.8 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 218 gm
NJ 95.22

A buckle (*baglus*) in a simple flower-head design set with a diamond in the centre and surrounded with three concentric rows of cabochon rubies, surmounted with diamond scallops, a circle of large rubies and an outer circle of diamonds.

The 82 rubies and 135 diamonds that constitute the jewel are all *a jour* set, but the claws that hold the rubies in place are in the form of faceted triangles, enhancing the lustre of the gems. Although the rubies are undoubtedly from Burma, they are not cabochon stones. The gems are concave and are referred to as cabochon rubies. Therefore, the stones are foiled to enhance their deep colour and the reverse is completely enclosed in gold. The design

of the jewel is typical of south Indian hair ornaments.

The buckle, fitted on a gold braid, forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Almas Kanval Zamarrud

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds
India
Late 19th century
W: 6 cm L: 6 cm
Weight: 75 gm
NJ 95.21

A buckle (*baglus*) set in an open-work floral design with a rectangular table-cut emerald in the centre, surrounded with two rows of diamonds and eight emeralds set within diamond-set scallops, with emerald and diamond clusters in the four corners.

The rich deep green of the emeralds suggest a Colombian origin. The centre emerald weighs approximately 6 carats and the total weight of the remaining 12 gems is almost 45 carats; in addition, 185 small diamonds make up the design.

The three centre vertical gems are square and rectangular, while the surrounding stones are oval and round. The balance and symmetry of the design is perfectly maintained with the clever juxtaposition of stones of varying shapes and sizes. The emeralds are all claw-set in open-back gold mounts, while the diamonds are set *a jour*. This elegant buckle was assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Almas Parab Partalanuma

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
Early 19th century
L: 160 cm
Weight: 2,356 gm
NJ 95.68

A shoulder belt combining a dagger sheath (*partalanuma*) in the form of open-work plaques *kundan*-set with foiled table-cut diamonds in a meandering floral design. The buckle (*baglus*) made up of three hinged sections with a six-petalled flower set with a large diamond in the centre and pear-shaped diamond petal surrounds defined with a row of small stones, and smaller rectangular pieces on either side. The plaques are sewn onto a braid belt whereby the meandering design flows in unbroken continuity all around the waist. The floral design set with diamonds is repeated on the rectangular sheath.

The belt is made up of 23 large and 21 small square plaques, the buckle and the sheath. No fewer than 1,383 flat diamonds weighing over 700 carats make up this impressive imperial accessory. Two diamonds in the flower-shaped buckle bear the inscription 'Allah...'. Worn over the shoulder, the sheath rests against the hip.

In fashions set by the Mughal emperors, even weapons and accessories constituted important elements of court attire and were fabricated as works of art. Thus dagger handles, hilts, sword sheaths and belts were elaborately embellished with gems. To the early Nizams asserting their suzerainty over the vast Deccan plateau, such flamboyant gem-set accessories were visible statements of power. By the time of the sixth and seventh Nizam, however, such elaborate belts were no longer worn. The jewel is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Kamar Patta Jaravi Barai Sari

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
Late 18th century
W: 5.3 cm Diam: 27.5 cm
Weight: 1,586 gm
NJ 95.105

A belt (*kamar patta*) in the form of pierced square hinged panels alternating floral and foliage designs with foiled table-cut diamonds *kundan*-set in gold. The reverse of the belt is in sheet gold, finely etched with flower and leaf motifs.

The belt is made up of 306 diamonds totally weighing about 430 carats. Stones of various shapes and sizes have been painstakingly selected and juxtaposed to ensure that no variations in design occur in the 13 square panels. The ability to do this is a hallmark of the virtuosity of the Indian craftsman. His skills in this area were well honed over centuries of assembling such stones into superb ornaments.

Ancient Indian texts on gemmology, such as Buddhabhatta's *Ratnapariksha* and Varamihira's *Brihatsamhita*, specifically state that the diamond should be retained in its natural octahedral form. As a consequence, although ancient Indian lapidarists were well versed in cutting diamonds they rarely reduced the weight of a stone by cutting or faceting. They usually restricted themselves to hiding flaws by placing facets on the surface of the rough gem.

*Parabs* or flat diamonds were therefore quite acceptable and were accorded the same regard as large stones and used in very much the same manner. To give them dimension and the lustre they otherwise lacked, they were invariably foiled. The fact that flat diamonds were so liberally used in imperial jewels is indicative of the esteem in which they were held. Diamonds were so highly valued that even the tiniest slivers were incorporated into the design.

Waist belts such as these are common in south India and the design, workmanship and the finely etched patterns on the reverse combine to indicate a Deccani origin. This piece was perhaps once worn by one of the *zenana* ladies.

It belongs to the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Kanval Almas

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
Late 19th century
Buckle – Diam: 7 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 173 gm
NJ 95.20

A beautiful buckle (*baglus*) in a flower-head design with a superb old-cut golden coloured Golconda diamond set *a jour* in the centre. The petal surrounds, each set with three graduating diamonds and interspersed with smaller petals set with single gems. The buckle is fitted on a gold braid belt.

The entire jewel glows with the golden hue inherent in the gems. The centre stone weighs approximately 30 carats and the total weight of the surrounding 32 gems is more than 47 carats. Star or flower designs such as these are of European inspiration and were popular brooch designs in the late 19th century. The ornament forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Almas Sher

Gold set with diamonds and a ruby
Calcutta or Bombay
Late 19th–early 20th century
Buckle – W: 6.2 cm L: 10.1 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 213 gm
NJ 95.116

A buckle (*baglus*) in the form of a rectangular plaque with an applied design of a tiger encrusted with small diamonds and a ruby eye, standing amidst foliage set with diamonds. The rectangular loop element on the side also set with diamonds. The buckle fitted on a woven gold braid belt.

Approximately 560 small diamonds are set *a jour* in gold into the buckle. The tiger design is of European inspiration. The gold loop on the reverse is inscribed 'M & Co LD. 18c'. From the letters, it is likely that the manufacturer was Marcks & Co Ltd, a jewellery firm with workshops located in Calcutta and Bombay. The gold used in the buckle is of 18 carat purity.

Mahboob Ali Pasha was a keen hunter, well known for the exciting hunts that he frequently organized. Innumerable members of European royalty visited Hyderabad to participate in his lavish shoots. It is likely that this buckle was made for Mahboob. The tiger forms part of the Asaf Jah crest.

The piece belongs to the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Jaravi Zamarrud Wa Larli

Gold set with diamonds, emeralds and spinels
Deccan
18th century
W: 3.9 cm  Diam: 44 cm
Weight: 483 gm
NJ 95.79

A belt and buckle (*baglus*) in the form of open-work floral pieces set with diamonds, emeralds and spinels. The flower-head buckle in three hinged sections with an oval rose-cut emerald weighing approximately 40 carats in the centre, with an alternating spinel and diamond surround and flanked on either side with table-cut square emeralds, pear-shaped spinels and small diamonds in a foliate design. The belt composed of alternating pieces in the form of flowers with spinel centres and diamond surrounds and smaller rectangular pieces set with emeralds and diamonds.

The total weight of the diamonds is about 182 carats, of the emeralds 70 carats and of the spinels more than 100 carats. The colour of the spinels – inclining towards a purplish-pink – indicate that they might be of Sri Lankan origin. The gems are all *kundan*-set in gold, the backs left plain in a technique typical of south India. Each piece with a loop at the back and all threaded sequentially according to the design onto a flat gold braid. Belts such as these could be adjusted to the waist of the wearer by the addition or removal of pieces; furthermore, when the braid wore off, it could be easily replaced with a fresh one.

While the design and the combination of coloured stones in this ornament imply that it might have been a lady's belt, it is important to note that it was never considered effeminate for men to wear such jewels. To royalty, impressive ornaments such as this provided a perfect opportunity for the use of vast quantities of major gems from the treasury. Belts formed an integral part of traditional Mughal-style court dress. A small jewelled dagger (*katar*) was usually tucked into it. In portraits of Mughal emperors – Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb – belts such as these are clearly visible.[65]

The jewel forms part of the items assigned to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Almas Wa Zamarrud

Gold set with an emerald and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Buckle – W: 6.2 cm  L: 8 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 124 gm
NJ 95.98

A simple buckle (*baglus*) set with a large oval rose-cut emerald in the centre surrounded with a row of rose-cut diamonds with minuscule gold trefoil surmounts and diamond set attachments. The emerald weighing approximately 200 carats set within a fluted mount, the diamonds foiled and *kundan*-set in gold and purported to weigh about 20 carats. The buckle is attached to a gold braid belt.

It forms part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Zabarjad Wa Kanval Almas

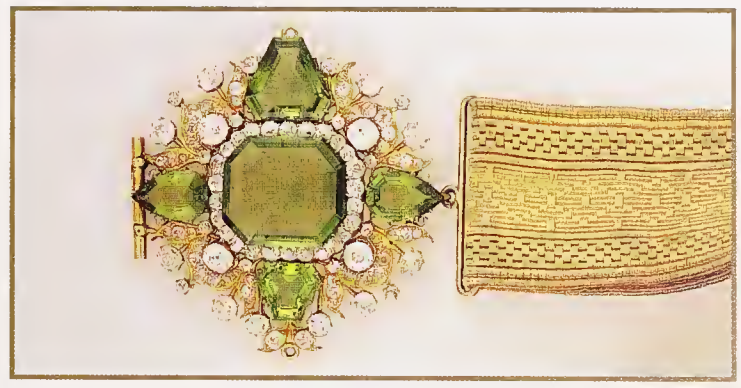
Gold set with peridots and diamonds
Deccan
Late 19th century
Buckle – W: 7 cm  L: 7.4 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 198 gm
NJ 95.11

A rare and beautiful buckle (*baglus*) in an open-work foliate design set with an impressive octagonal table-cut peridot in the centre surrounded with a row of diamonds, flanked on two sides with trapezium-shaped and on two sides with pear-shaped peridots interspersed with diamonds.

The stones are set in gold in open-back lightweight claw mounts. The large gem in the centre weighs about 50 carats and the combined weight of the four smaller peridots is estimated to be approximately 90 carats. A total of 97 old-cut round diamonds of varying sizes completes the design.

The distinctive olive, yellowish-green peridots used in this buckle are very rarely encountered in traditional Indian jewellery. However, Mahboob Ali Pasha was reputed to have been fond of the gem and commissioned special pieces incorporating these stones.[66] These gems are most likely to have come from Burma. Due to the relative rarity of the stone, this buckle was probably a commissioned piece, made by a Hyderabad jeweller or perhaps by a jeweller from Bombay or Calcutta. Imperial lifestyle engendered jewels that combined functionality with the aesthetics and flamboyance evident in this example.

This unusual ornament has been assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.



## Baglus Almas

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
Late 18th century
W: 6.2 cm L: 17 cm
Weight: 252 gm
NJ 95.41

An elegant buckle (*baglus*) in the form of three hinged sections curved to fit the waist, with foiled old-cut diamonds *kundan*-set in gold in an open-work symmetrical design of lotus blossoms and buds amidst foliage of leaves and smaller flowers. The reverse of the buckle is encased in sheet gold with a finely etched pattern of floral motifs.

The five large diamonds in the centre weigh approximately 30 carats while the weight of the 146 stones of varying sizes is purported to be about 55 carats. The large diamond in the centre and the pear-shaped gems around it have been carefully selected to simulate the form of flower petals and to maintain the perfect proportions and balance of the overall design. The ornament is testimony to the exquisite quality of Deccani craftsmanship. The etching on the reverse is typical of traditional south Indian jewellery and is reminiscent of the fine metal work (*bidri*) that the Deccan was renowned for.

During Mahboob's reign, the traditional Mughal court dress comprising a voluminous overdress was replaced by the more simple long, high-buttoned coat; even European dress was accepted and the Nizam often wore typical English-style suits. Flamboyant jewels were rarely worn. However, two items were mandatory – the belt with buckle (*baglus*) and a distinctively Hyderabadi headgear (*dastar*). Elaborately jewelled buckles were made to embellish plain belts. In a photograph dating to the 1870s, young Mahboob Ali Pasha can be clearly seen wearing this beautiful *baglus* on an elaborately embroidered velvet coat (page 45).

The ornament is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Tehnal Almas Kanval Barai Shamsheer

Silver and gold set with diamonds
Deccan
Early 19th century
L: 13 cm W (excluding the rings): 5.5 cm
Weight: 282 gm
NJ 95.66

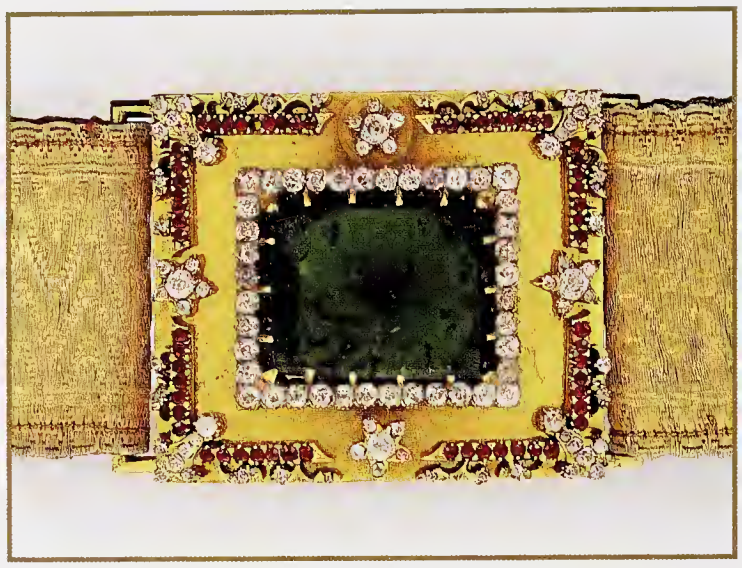
A sheath for a dagger (*tehnal shamsheer*), the front with foiled old-cut diamonds *kundan*-set in silver in a geometric pattern with a large gem in the centre, with diamond surrounds, bordered with a row of gems. A finely twisted gold cord outlines the fluted silver setting. The loops connected to faceted and etched bead-like attachments. The sheet gold reverse with a finely etched pattern of scrolls, flowers and leaves, bordered with a twisted gold cord.

The large diamond in the centre weighs approximately 8 carats. The silver ground for the diamonds provides a perfect setting to enhance the lustre of the gems. Silver was rarely employed in traditional Indian jewellery. It was particularly not common for royal jewels to be made from silver since it was considered the metal of the poor. However, silver was used quite extensively in jewellery manufacture in Lucknow and also in the Deccan. The size and quality of the gems in this sheath irrefutably indicate that the accessory was an imperial piece.

The jewel belongs to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas Wa Yakhoot

Gold set with an emerald, rubies and diamonds
India, probably Calcutta
Late 19th century
Buckle – W: 5 cm L: 6 cm Emerald: 2.5 x 3 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 235 gm
NJ 95.49

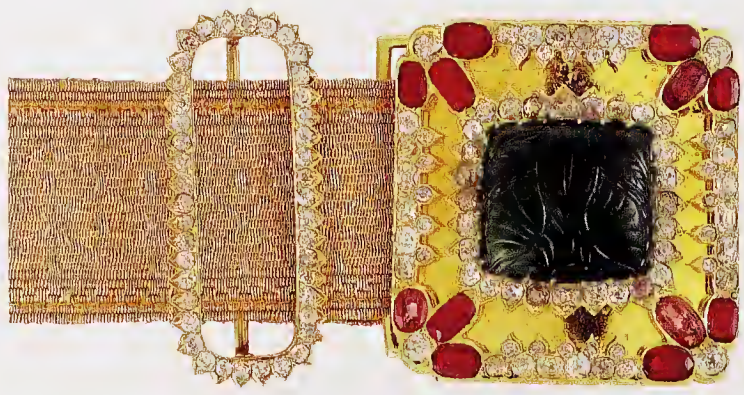


A buckle (*baglus*) in the form of a gold plaque set in the centre with a large rectangular table-cut emerald within a diamond surround, and diamond and ruby foliate details bordering the edge. The gems are all claw-set in the technique typical of the period. The Colombian emerald, purported to weigh about 70 carats, is held in its setting with claws. The loop elements are in plain gold. The buckle is attached to a flat gold brocade braid.

The piece belongs to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Almas Zamarrud Wa Yakhoot

Gold set with a carved emerald, rubies and diamonds
India
Late 19th century Emerald carved in the 18th century
Buckle – W: 4.5 cm L: 4.5 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 112 gm
NJ 95.99



A buckle (*baglus*) in the form of a plaque centering upon a square carved emerald within a diamond surround and diamond and ruby foliate details in the four corners with diamonds along the edges. The emerald set in claws and the other gems encased in pure gold. The loop on the side is also set with diamonds. The buckle and the loop are fitted on a flat brocade braid belt.

The Colombian emerald of deep green colour weighs approximately 25 carats. The surface is decorated with a shallow but finely executed carving of two lotus buds and leaves. The lotus motif appears repeatedly in the jewels of the Nizams. The Mughal emperors were passionately fond of emeralds and acquired them in huge quantities. Large emeralds were carved with verses, titles, and symbolic floral and geometric designs to enhance their inherent talismanic potency. They were worn in simple settings as pendants or armbands. The quality of the carving and design motifs in this piece suggest that it might have been carved in Jaipur in the 18th century. It is likely that the gem was previously used in another setting before being incorporated into this buckle.

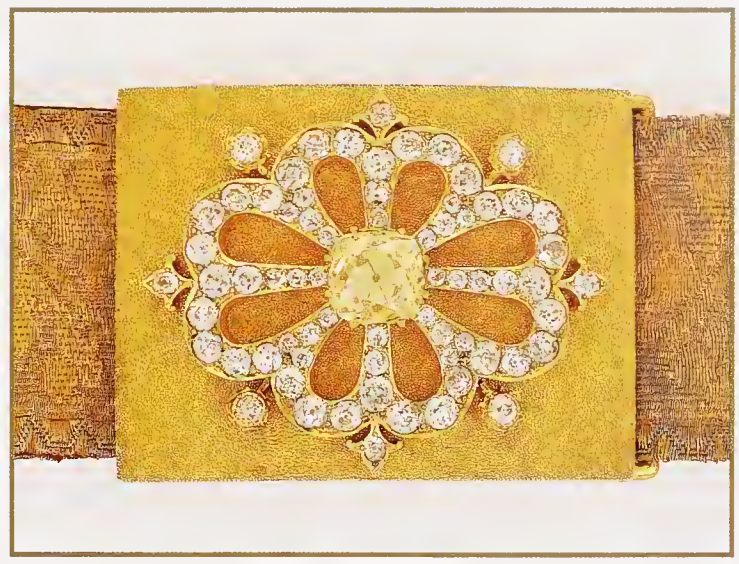
The ornament is part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Baglus Almas Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
India
Late 19th century
Buckle – W: 6 cm  L: 8 cm
Weight (including braid belt): 442 gm
NJ 95.45

A rectangular buckle (*baglus*) in the form of a gold plaque with an applied motif centering around a large old-cut golden coloured diamond weighing approximately 15 carats, surrounded with flower petals in the form of loops set with diamonds and surmounted with trefoil and minuscule flower forms around the outer edge. The finely frosted surface of the plaque provides a matt background for the gems.

The Nizam's inventory of 1950 records a value of Rs 50,000 for the jewel and it forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.



## Baglus Kanval Almas Wa Patta Tilai

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
Late 19th century
Buckle – W: 7.5 cm  L: 14 cm
Weight: 785 gm
NJ 95.4

A buckle (*baglus*) comprising an oval centre-piece in a sunburst design centering upon a large diamond and graduated diamond surrounds bordered with a row of small gems; symmetrically flanked on either side with diamonds set in a loop pattern. Fitted on a gold mesh belt (*patta tilai*) with two side pieces with finely etched floral motifs.

The 203 old-cut diamonds that make up this beautiful buckle weigh about 100 carats. The eclectic character of Deccani workmanship is manifest, wherein the piece combines claw setting, *a jour* setting and closed setting. This impressive royal accessory is part of the jewels assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

# Earrings

## Lu Lu Kanval Almas Wa Marvareed

Gold set with diamonds, pearls and pearl drops
India
Late 19th–early 20th century
L: 4.5 cm  L (pearl drop): 2 cm
Weight: 22 gm
NJ 95.100/1-2

A pair of ear pendants (*lu lu*), each with a beautiful pearl drop suspended from a diamond-set cap and surmounted with a small pearl and a single large old-cut diamond. The gems are claw-set in lightweight mounts. The design and setting are elegantly simple, enhancing the beautiful gems. Long earrings were very fashionable in the early 20th century, their vertical length exaggerated by the use of large drop pearls, spinels, emerald drops and briolette diamonds. The two large diamonds together weigh about 15 carats while the combined weight of the pearls is estimated to be more than 600 *chows*.

The jewels are part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Lu Lu Yakhoot Wa Almas Kanval Wa Larli

Gold set with diamonds, briolette diamond drops, rubies and spinel drops
India
Late 19th–early 20th century
L: 5.8 cm
Weight: 17 gm
NJ 95.102/1-2

A pair of ear pendants (*lu lu*), each with a beautiful faceted spinel drop suspending a small briolette diamond, surmounted with a single diamond and a flower-head set with a ruby centre and diamond surrounds. Claw-set gems in open-back gold mounts enhance the delicacy of the ear pendants. The design is a fusion of Indian and Western elements. While the flower-head design is typically Indian, the simplicity of the form and the use of spinel drops to enhance the length are of Western inspiration.

The vast majority of rubies and spinels used in Indian jewellery came from Burma. However, the deep purplish-pink colour of the gems that are used in these ear pendants suggest that they might have originated in the ruby mines of Sri Lanka.

The jewels are part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Lu Lu Almas Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
India
Late 19th–early 20th century
L: 5.5 cm
Weight: 13 gm
NJ 95.101/1-2

A pair of ear pendants (*lu lu*), each with a pear-shaped old-cut diamond with small diamonds set in trefoil elements on top and bottom and three diamonds spaced on either side, surmounted with a single round diamond and an oval diamond with eight small gems evenly spaced around the edge. Although the pieces are made in India, the lightweight mounts and elegant design appear to be inspired by the West. Traditionally, Indian ear pendants were *kundan*-set with gems in large and heavy flower-head forms with delicate enamelling and a fringe of pearls around the lower edge. The unusual design and the beautiful Golconda gems weighing approximately 20 carats suggest that this was a special ornament.

These ear jewels form part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chowkaray Marvareed

Gold set with pearls and emerald beads; enamelled
Deccan
Early 19th century
L: 4 cm
Weight: 22 gm
NJ 95.150/1-2

A pair of earrings, each in the form of a cluster of four (*chowkaray*) pearls with an emerald bead centre attached to a thick gold ring with twisted wires. The tops of the pearls with red enamel flower-shaped caps, the bottom with flat green enamelled discs. The jewels are identical to two other pairs in the collection (below and facing page). Earrings such as these were popular ornament forms among men and women throughout Mughal India and were obviously made in large quanities for practically every member of the royal household. This pair of earrings was assigned to Gowhar Begum and forms part of the group of jewels in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chowkaray Marvareed

Gold set with pearls and emerald beads; enamelled
Deccan
Early 19th century
L: 4 cm
Weight: 24 gm
NJ 95.128/1-2

A pair of earrings, each in the form of a gold ring with a cluster of four (*chowkaray*) pearls with an emerald bead in the centre. The pearls topped with red enamel flower-head caps and the holes covered with flat gold discs enamelled in green. The eight pearls are purported to weigh about 100 *chows*.

In India, earrings were not the sole prerogative of women. The ear was considered a microcosm of the entire body – critical acupuncture points are situated in the centre of the lobe. Indian sculptures testify that gods, women and men wore elaborate ear jewels. In miniature paintings of the 18th and 19th centuries, this particular form of earring is frequently encountered. In the present collection, there are two more pairs (above and facing page) that are identical in every respect to the present example.

This pair of earrings forms part of the collection that was assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Lu Lu Marvareed

Gold set with pearls; enamelled
Deccan
19th century
L: 3.8 cm
Weight: 9 gm
NJ 95.136/1-2

A pair of simple ear pendants (*lu lu*), each suspending a pearl drop with a red enamel flower cap on top, the bottom with green enamel and surmounted with a flat gold disc attached to the hook. Jewels such as these were probably intended for everyday wear.

Both pieces are set with a perfectly matched pair of Basra pearls. They form part of the jewels assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chowkaray Marvareed

Gold set with pearls and emerald beads; enamelled
Deccan
Early 19th century
L: 4.5 cm
Weight: 24 gm
NJ 95.166/1-2

A pair of earrings, each in the form of a thick gold ring suspending a flower-head with four (*chowkaray*) pearls set in a square with an emerald bead in the centre. The pearls are surmounted with red enamel caps in the design of flower petals and the bottom is sealed with a flat green enamelled disc.

These classically simple forms, commonly known as *balis* in north India, were extremely popular. These pieces have been made drawing upon the vast resources of pearls held in the Hyderabad treasury. Two other pairs (facing page) in the present collection are identical to this example.

These jewels were set aside for Mehr-un-nissa Begum, Osman Ali Khan's daughter, in the Sixth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Antiyan Marvareed

Gold with pearls and emerald beads
Deccan
19th century
L: 4.5 cm
Weight: 15 gm
NJ 95.129/1-2

A pair of earrings (*antiyan*), each in the form of a gold ring with an emerald bead spacer between two pearls. While the antiquity of this classically simple design is indeterminable, the fashion for such earrings was perpetuated by the Mughal emperors and emulated in provincial courts all over India. Although this pair forms part of the collection of jewels allocated to Ekbal Begum, they might have once been used by a male member of the family. There is another similar pair (below) in the collection.

The earrings are part of the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Antiyan Marvareed

Gold with pearls and emerald beads
Deccan
19th century
L: 4 cm
Weight: 14 gm
NJ 95.151/1-2

A pair of earrings (*antiyan*) in the form of thick gold hoops, each strung with an emerald bead between two pearls. A design of classic simplicity, this form evolved with little change over several centuries.

It was during the Mughal Emperor Jahangir's reign in the 17th century, that the practice of wearing a loop with a ruby or emerald between two pearls became very popular. The fashion originated when the emperor himself had his ears pierced and adorned with pearls in thanksgiving for recovery from a serious illness. Thereafter, it became customary for every noble in court to pierce his ears and wear gold hoops decorated with pearls and ruby or emerald beads.

For women, this kind of jewel formed part of everyday wear, and earrings such as these were undoubtedly made in large quantities. The fine

quality Basra pearls and deep green Colombian emerald beads of this pair and another identical set (above) in the collection testify that these were specially made for the royal household.

These jewels were allocated to Gowhar Begum and they form part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Lu Lu Zamarrud

Gold set with emerald beads; enamelled
Deccan
19th century
Bead – L: 3.5 cm
Weight: 10 gm
NJ 95.135/1-2

A pair of simple ear pendants (*lu lu*), each with an emerald drop suspended from a gold cap decorated with red enamel and surmounted with a flat gold disc attached to the hook. The design is similar to another pair of pearl ear pendants (NJ 95.136/1-2), and was obviously made for everyday use. These ear pendants are part of Ekbal Begum's jewels and belong to the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chakriyan Almas

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
Diam: 3 cm
Weight: 28 gm
NJ 95.153/1-2

A pair of round (*chakriyan*) ear studs, each in the form of a flower-head *kundan*-set in gold with a foiled table-cut diamond in the centre surrounded with eight smaller diamonds and framed with pearls strung on a gold wire. The reverse and the screw-head are enamelled with red and green floral motifs with traces of powder blue and white. The ear studs are similar to another pair in the collection (below). This pair was assigned to Gowhar Begum and forms part of the jewels in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Chakriyan Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
Diam: 3 cm
Weight: 27 gm
NJ 95.130/1-2

A pair of ear studs (*chakriyan*), each in the design of a flower-head centrally set with a foiled table-cut diamond within a fluted gold mount framed with a row of pearls strung on gold wire. The reverse and the screw-head are enamelled with a red flower with blue stamens and green leaves on a white ground. The detailing of the gold around the large diamond simulating a flower form, the bold enamelling and the deep colours are distinctive of Deccani craftsmanship. This pair is similar to another in the collection (above). These were set aside for Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Pankhiyan Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled
Deccan
19th century
L: 4.7 cm
Weight: 36 gm
NJ 95.127/1-2

A pair of fan-shaped (*pankhiyan*) ear jewels, each set with rose diamonds in open-back mounts, with a fringe of nine pearls capped with red enamel and tipped with emerald beads. Instinctively foretelling the medical knowledge that acupuncture points are located in the ears, women ensured physical and mental well-being by wearing ornaments in almost every part of the ear. Such fan-shaped jewels were usually attached to the scapha (the top outer edge of the ear). These jewels were allocated to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Karan Phool Almas

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled
Deccan
19th century
L: 16 cm
Weight: 79 gm
NJ 95.154/1-2

A pair of ear jewels, each in the form of a flower-head *kumdan*-set in gold with foiled table-cut diamonds, suspending a bell-shaped enamelled and diamond-set terminal with a fringe of pearls, each with a gold cap enamelled in red and a minuscule emerald bead at the bottom. *Karan* (ear) *phool* (flowers), the term derived from the flower form of the jewels, are pan-Indian and evolved in an unbroken continuity through the centuries. The jewels are worn with pearl strings (*phalas*) hooked into the hair over the ears to support their weight. This pair is almost identical to two others (facing page) and was allocated to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Pankhiyan Almas

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled
Deccan
19th century
L: 4.5 cm
Weight: 38 gm
NJ 95.152/1-2

A pair of fan-shaped earrings (*pankhiyan*), each set *a jour* with nine rose-cut diamonds suspending a fringe of pearls with enamel caps and emerald bead tips. These fan-shaped ear jewels, identical to another pair in the collection (above) were worn on the scapha of the ear. These form part of the jewels assigned to Gowhar Begum and belong to the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Karan Phool Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled
Deccan
Mid-19th century
L: 16 cm  Diam (flower-head): 3.5 cm
Weight: 80 gm
NJ 95.165/1-2

A pair of ear ornaments (*karan phool*), each in the design of a flower-head with a diamond surrounded with ten pear-shaped petals, each with a table-cut diamond set in open-back mounts, suspending a bell-shaped terminal with diamonds and enamelled in green and red, and a fringe of pearls with an enamelled cap and a minute emerald bead below. The two rows of pearls with emerald bead spacers attached to each ear jewel (*phalas*), is to be hooked into the hair behind the ears to support the weight of the ornaments.

These ear ornaments were allocated to Mehr-un-nissa Begum in the Sixth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Lu Lu Almas

Gold and silver set with diamonds
Deccan
Late 19th century
L: 2.3 cm
Weight: 8 gm
NJ 95.138/1-2

A pair of simple ear pendants (*lu lu*), each with a large old-cut pear-shaped diamond claw-set in silver, surmounted with a round diamond set in gold and attached to a hook. The combined weight of the diamonds is estimated to be about 8 carats. The earrings form part of the jewels assigned to Ekbal Begum and belong to the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Karan Phool Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled
Deccan
Late 19th century
L: 16.5 cm
Weight: 78 gm
NJ 95.126/1-2

A pair of flower-form ear jewels (*karan phool*), each centrally claw-set with an old-cut diamond and pear-shaped open-back petal surrounds set with diamonds, suspending a bell-shaped terminal enamelled in green and red and set with diamonds, with a fringe of pearls with red enamel caps and tipped with green emerald beads. The ear jewels are identical to two others in the collection (above and facing page) and were assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

# Armbands

## Bazuband Marvareed

Gold and silver set with diamonds and ruby beads; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
L: 12.5 cm  Diam (flower-head): 3 cm
Weight: 76 gm
NJ 95.114/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), each with a centre-piece in the form of a flower in full bloom, the front set centrally with a foiled table-cut diamond in an articulated gold *kundan* setting within a two-layer diamond petal surround. The heart-shaped petals with flat old-cut diamonds bordered with silver around the edge. Ruby beads also carved in the shape of petals are attached with gold wires between the diamond petal layers. The reverse is polychrome enamelled. The tiny gold loops at the back are for the attachment of the pearl strings.

Few early Deccani and Mughal period jewels have survived to permit the development of a precise chronology of styles and craftsmanship techniques. However, items such as these reflect the continuity and the unique interpretation of Mughal aesthetics in far-flung areas of the empire.[67] Jewels made in a similar fashion were being manufactured in the middle of the 18th century in Murshidabad.[68]

The imagination and skill of the designer and the technical virtuosity of the Deccani craftsman is manifest in so many details of these armbands. The placing of a row of ruby beads between the diamond petals so that, when seen from the front, the flower assumes a pink glow simulating a real bloom is unique; the 12 small diamond petals in the top row and 10 larger ones in the lower row are all positioned at an angle to the centre gem and by merely outlining the flat diamonds with silver, instead of embedding them in gold, the craftsman was able to achieve a realistic effect. Flat diamonds that are so liberally used in Indian jewellery lend themselves to such artistry. All credit to the imagination of the craftsman who devised such methods to effectively use what would otherwise have been just flat pieces of glass. The combination of gold and silver provides a striking contrast in the setting. The reverse of the pieces are enamelled with narcissus flowers – delicate white blossoms with golden yellow centres and green leaves set against a deep red ground.

This kind of workmanship is encountered in other jewels in the collection. A set of turban ornaments (NJ 95.82/2 and NJ 95.81/2) are similarly made but without the use of silver. These beautiful armbands form part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Taveez Dand Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas

Silver set with emeralds and diamonds
Deccan
Mid-18th century
W: 4.2 cm L: 7 cm Emeralds: 2.5 x 3.1 cm
Weight: 82 gm
NJ 95.36/1-2

A pair of amulet (*taveez*) armbands, each centering upon a magnificent rectangular step-cut emerald claw-set within a row of small diamonds and old-cut diamond petal surrounds in open-back silver mounts.

The Colombian emeralds, of a rich deep green colour and superb quality, weigh approximately 100 and 150 carats. The open setting in lieu of the more traditional *kundan* setting is obviously intentional since the wonderful colour and quality of the gems obviated the need for foiling. The use of silver is typical of Deccani jewellery and clearly indicates that the cheaper metal was not considered inferior. Silver provides a perfect foil for the dark green emeralds and a stronger mount for these beautiful and priceless gems. Although the collection is replete with emeralds and emerald beads, these stones are exceptional for their size, weight, colour and quality. Although the emeralds are of different weights, in size they are almost a perfect pair – such gems are every jeweller's dream!

Armbands such as this pair were originally used as amulets, worn to protect the wearer in battle or against the harmful effects of evil spirits. "In Sufism, an emerald mountain stands for the final level of spiritual aspiration, when man has passed through the blackness of annihilation and emerged in paradise, at last able to view the world as through the eyes of God."[69] Emeralds were coveted by the Mughal emperors, who collected large quantities and used them extensively in their jewellery.

More importantly, the annals of these jewels are closely allied to the history of the Asaf Jah dynasty. They are believed to have once belonged to Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore. Tipu challenged British authority and was an impediment in their quest for political consolidation of India. In the last bitter battle fought in 1799, between the English and Tipu Sultan, the mighty tiger was killed and the former Hindu rajas of Mysore re-instated on the throne under British protection. Tipu's personal belongings were completely ransacked after his death; few other Indian states were subjected to the scale of looting as Mysore. A prize committee was appointed to divide the treasures of jewels and other objects between the soldiers, officers and the King of England.

Nizam Ali Khan, Asaf Jah II, played an important role in the Tipu debacle. Already an ally of the British, he provided valuable support in the form of troops and financial aid. According to historians, "a fourth of the second share of the prize-money of Seringapatam was to be paid to the Nizam, and, with a prudent regard for the interests of British trade, the Government of Madras thought it expedient to convert the amount into broadcloth, plate, china, glass, and the like, in order to initiate His Highness and his court into a taste for the elegant superfluities of European living."[70] These two magnificent emerald armbands and a gem-encrusted sword (Shamsheer Murassa Kalan[71] – described by Dinshah Gazdar in 1950 as "the permanent guardian of the ancient treasures of His Exalted Highness the Nizam.")[72] were received by Nizam Ali Khan. Tipu memorabilia is scattered in collections around the world.[73] In recent years, gems and jewels originally believed to have been part of the Tipu booty have been appearing for sale in the world art market.

The armbands belong to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Almas Parab

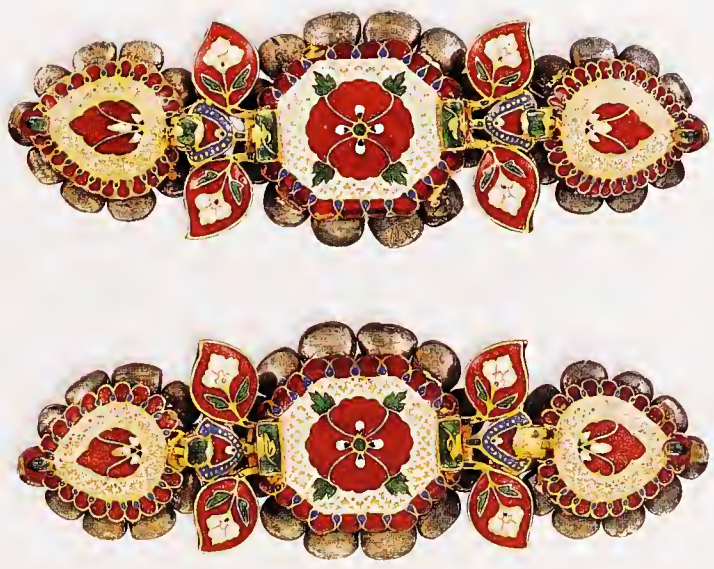
Gold and silver set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan or Murshidabad
Early 18th century
W: 3.7 cm L: 11 cm
Weight: 121 gm
NJ 95.83/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), each in the form of three hinged flower-head sections, the middle piece centering upon a large hexagonal table-cut (*parab*) diamond within diamond petal surrounds, flanked on either side with pear-shaped sections each centrally set with a diamond within petal surrounds. Diamond-set gold leaves serve as links between the sections. The reverse is polychrome enamelled.

There are several unusual features in these armbands that set them apart as surviving examples of 18th century craftsmanship. The six large diamonds collectively weigh about 35 carats. They are all foiled and *kundan*-set in silver in the front, enhancing the lustre and size of the gems, but encased in gold at the back to permit the use of the full range of enamel colours. The diamond petals are set in silver and attached at an angle to the centre stone. By doing this the craftsman has simulated a realistic flower form. The enamel motifs of red poppy flowers and buds and white narcissi with green leaves and light blue highlights against a mosaic-like white and gold ground is rendered in exquisite detail.

These armbands are among the few early 18th century items in the collection but in the absence of precise information, a definite area of attribution is difficult. It is in fine jewels such as these that the continuity of Mughal aesthetics and inherited craftsmanship skills is manifest in courts as far-flung as Murshidabad, Oudh and Hyderabad. A turban ornament attributed to Murshidabad in the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, presented by the Nawab of Bengal to Admiral Charles Watson in 1757, is remarkably similar in composition and execution.[74] However, these armbands are examples of early Deccani work. This attribution is based on the quality and palette of the enamelling – the deep red and green colours with mauvish-blue highlights and the liberal use of white around the flowers.

The armbands form part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.



## Bazuband Navaratna

Gold set with the nine planetary gems; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
19th century
W: 1.1 cm L: 20.5 cm
Weight: 134 gm
NJ 95.73/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), each consisting of 11 rectangular and octagonal panels, *kundan*-set with a gem representing the nine planets of the Hindu astrological system, and the end pieces with a pear-shaped diamond. The sides are enamelled with delicate green tear-drop motifs outlined in gold on a white ground. The reverse with very finely rendered yellow flowers on a green ground, bordered with minuscule white flowers and leaves on a red ground.

Subtle adjustments have been made by accommodating the round pearl and the oval cat's eye in octagonal settings. Yet, the overall harmony and symmetry does not falter. Each plaque is gently curved on the reverse to fit the arm. Subtleties such as this are hallmarks of early jewels. Golden yellow enamel work is customarily attributed to the Deccan and these examples are no exception.

The *navaratna* combination of nine gems corresponding to the planets recognized by the Indian astrological system – Sun (ruby), Moon (pearl), Mercury (emerald), Mars (coral), Jupiter (topaz), Venus (diamond), Saturn (sapphire), and the ascending and descending nodes of the moon (zircon and cat's eye) – were worn for their beneficial effect on the human body. These beliefs permeated even the Muslim courts where they were worn for similar reasons. The most common arrangement of the nine gems is a circular form, with the ruby, representing the sun, in the centre. When the stones are set in an extended linear arrangement, such as in these armbands, the ruby is still placed in the centre, flanked by the other principal gems with additional stones used as fillers.

It was the distinctive fashion in the Nizam's court to wear three armbands, one below the other. The first piece was the broad and elaborate *bhujband* (NJ 95.59/1-2 and NJ 95.15/1-2), below which was the simpler *baznband* (NJ 95.113/1-2 and NJ 95.39/1-2) and, just above the elbow, the *joshan* or *navaratna* (like this piece). However, the first two terms were often used interchangeably. This ornament appears to have been worn frequently by Mahboob Ali Pasha as well as Mir Osman Ali Khan (page 48).

These jewels have been wrongly categorized as bracelets (*dastband*) in the Nizam's inventory and a value of Rs 20,000 has been assigned to them. They form part of the regalia items in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Murassa

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
W: 6.8 cm  L: 18 cm
Weight: 401 gm
NJ 95.76/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), each comprising seven foliate panels *kundan*-set with foiled table-cut diamonds within petal-shaped surrounds. The centre-piece with a large diamond within an octagonal outline, tapering to pear-shaped end pieces on either side and an outer running pearl border. The reverse polychrome enamelled.

From the size of the ornament, the large fine quality diamonds and the superb workmanship, it is obvious that these jewels were made for a favourite child of the royal household. The reverse of the armbands is enamelled with a bold pattern of red flowers with white and green centres and foliage on a white ground enhanced with areas of monochrome green and gold. The motifs and the colour palette showcase the high quality of Deccani enamel work.

The armbands form part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Zamarrud Wa Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-18th century
Large pair – W: 4.8 cm L: 12.2 cm Small pair – W: 4 cm L: 10.3 cm
Weight (large): 141 gm Weight (small): 104 gm
NJ 95.34/1-4

Two pairs of armbands (*bazuband*), each in the form of three open-work foliate panels set with emeralds within table-cut diamond clusters. The emeralds in open-back settings, the diamonds foiled and *kundan*-set in gold. The reverse of the diamonds enamelled in red and yellow with white highlights.

These armbands are of typical Deccani workmanship and are stylistically similar to a set of turban ornaments in the collection (NJ 95.72/1-5). A similar pair of armbands were sold at a Christie's auction in London in 1999.[75] Jewels such as these were most likely made in large quantities to be given as gifts to deserving nobles or for various members of the Nizam's vast household.

The armbands form part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Murassa

Gold and silver set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
W: 7.4 cm L: 16 cm
Weight: 297 gm
NJ 95.59/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), each in the form of three hinged graduated open-work foliate panels, with a large pear-shaped table-cut diamond in the centre amidst two rows of foiled cluster surrounds. The side panels in triangular shapes similarly set with a pear-shaped diamond in the centre and surrounded with diamonds. The backs of the armbands are polychrome enamelled.

Of typical 19th century Deccani workmanship, the impressively large diamonds in the centre weighing approximately 20 carats each are set in silver while the rest of the gems are *kundan*-set in gold. The fine enamelling of red flowers with green foliage and mauvish-blue and white highlights against a white ground is rendered in exquisite detail. The use of Mughal floral imagery is conspicuous. However, the Hyderabadi enameller lent his own personal touch, manifest in the delicate blue highlights and white setting for the flowers.

Ornate and large armbands such as these (also referred to as *bhujband*) were worn on the upper arm by the ruler as a proclamation of his royalty and wealth. These jewels form part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Almas Neem Kanval

Silver set with diamonds
Western India
19th century
W: 6.2 cm  L: 15 cm
Weight: 149 gm
NJ 95.15/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband/bhujband*), each designed as three hinged open-work panels, the central panel set with a large table-cut diamond within a claw-set diamond cluster surround, the twin triangular side panels set with large table-cut diamonds within a cluster petal surround.

In this early variation of the *pachchikam* technique (where the workmanship is in silver with simulated claws), the backs are left open. However, the reverse of the large gems is partly covered with a grooved gold mount, perhaps to give a semblance of depth to otherwise flat stones. There are several necklaces and pendants in the collection that display similar workmanship.

The jewels have been assigned to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Parab Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Mid-19th century
W: 5.5 cm L: 27.5 cm
Weight: 375 gm
NJ 95.113/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*) in the form of nine square panels of open-work foliate design set with table-cut diamonds within foiled surrounds with an outer running pearl border. The reverse enamelled with red poppy flowers, green foliage and mauvish-blue highlights on a white and gold ground.

Typical of Deccani work, the centre diamonds in each of the panels are set in silver. These kind of flat armbands were very popular in Rajasthan and their design was fairly consistent.[76] Another similar pair in the collection (facing page) is of finer quality and perhaps of earlier manufacture. Variations were introduced by combining monochrome diamond settings with rubies and emeralds.

This pair forms part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

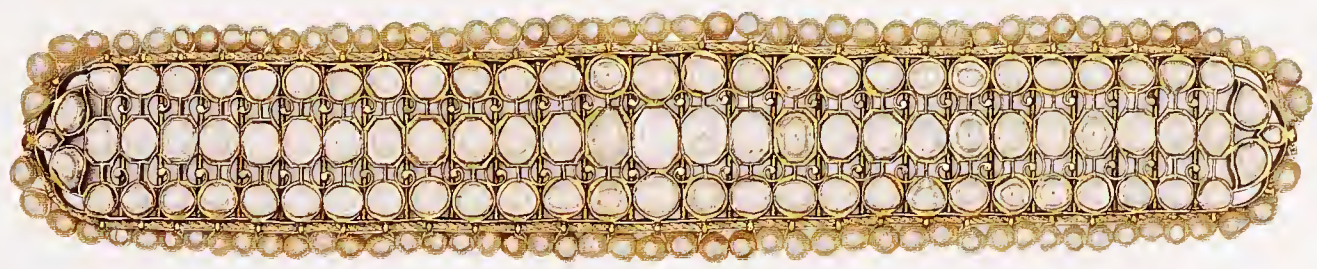
## Bazuband Parab Jaravi

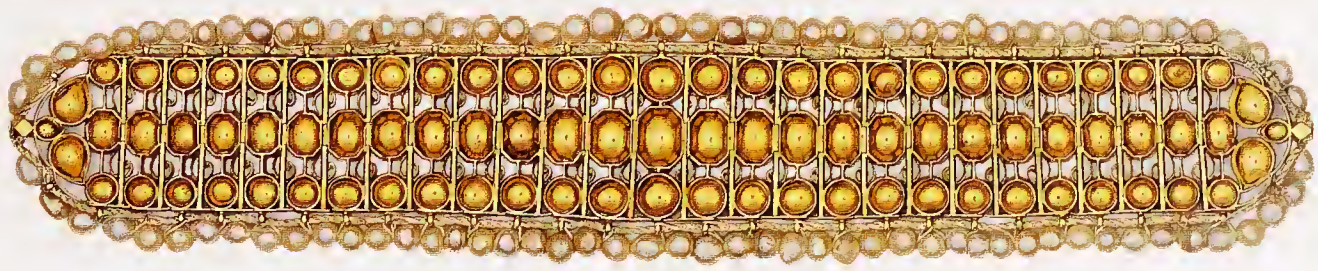
Gold set with diamonds and pearls
Deccan
Mid-19th century
W: 3.5 cm  L: 25 cm
Weight: 318 gm
NJ 95.113A/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), designed as a series of open-work table-cut diamond repeats in three rows interspersed with scrolling wire-work, and a running border of pearls all around the edge. The techniqe of manufacturing such jewels by stringing together identical panels served the purpose of increasing or decreasing the length of the jewel to fit the arm of the wearer. While the reverse of such armbands are usually decorated with enamel, in this pair the gems are encased in sheet gold devoid of any embellishment.

Worn by both men and women, armbands signified status and wealth and were made with important gems from the treasury.

This pair forms part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.





## Bazuband Almas Wa Mothi

Gold and silver set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Late 18th century
W: 4.6 cm L: 24.5 cm
Weight: 393 gm
NJ 95.39/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), each in the form of nine square open-work foliate panels *kundan*-set with foiled table-cut diamonds within diamond surrounds. An outer pearl border of fine quality Basra pearls. A total of 160 diamonds and 144 pearls has been used in these armbands. The reverse with delicately enamelled red poppy flowers and green foliage on a white ground.

In a practice that is distinctive of Deccani jewellery, the diamond in the centre of each panel is placed within a delineated silver setting. The quality of the enamelling establishes the development and mastery of this art form in the Deccani courts. The green and red enamel colours are built up to slightly above the surrounding white surface, giving a three-dimensional effect to the floral motifs.

This example is similar to another pair in the collection (NJ 95.113/1-2) that is of later manufacture. In his official coronation photograph, Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh Nizam, can be seen wearing these jewels or an identical pair of armbands over his richly brocaded coat (page 48).

The armbands have been assigned to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

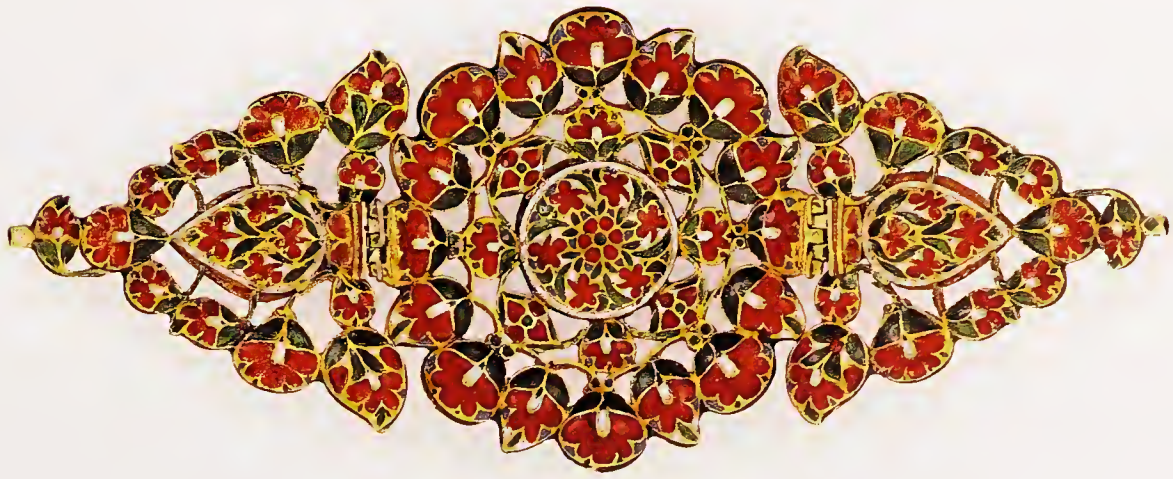
## Bazuband Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 19th century
W: 7 cm  L: 16.5 cm
Weight: 285 gm
NJ 95.115/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), in the form of three hinged open-work foliate panels, the centre in a circular shape set with clusters of foiled table-cut diamonds tapering to triangular side pieces with pear-shaped gem-set centres surrounded with diamonds. The reverse polychrome enamelled.

The refined quality of Deccani workmanship is manifest in the use of silver outlines for the centre diamonds and the enamel palette of deep red and green floral motifs with mauvish-blue and white highlights on the reverse. These armbands are typical of jewels made for the upper arms worn throughout north India and are very similar to another pair in the collection (NJ 95.59/1-2).

These pieces are part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.



## Bazuband Zamarrud

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds
India
Late 19th century
W: 3 cm L: 9 cm
Weight: 95 gm
NJ 95.3/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*), each in the form of three hinged panels set with cabochon emeralds surrounded with diamonds. The jewel combines setting techniques that were best suited to the quality of gems used. The six Colombian emeralds, totally weighing about 150 carats, are full of inclusions and are not of the finest quality – hence they are foiled on the reverse and claw-set in closed-back mounts. The rose-cut diamonds, however, are all delicately placed in open-back claw-settings.

The small size of the armbands implies that they were made for a young prince or princess. The armbands are included in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Zamarrud Khurd

Gold set with emeralds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
19th century
W: 1.3 cm L: 17 cm
Weight: 143 gm
NJ 95.54/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*) comprising 13 square and rectangular plaques, each *kundan*-set in gold with a cabochon emerald and triangular end pieces. The sides and reverse polychrome enamelled.

The 26 cabochon emeralds are purported to weigh approximately 125 carats and are all foiled to enhance their colour and hide flaws and inclusions intrinsic to emeralds. The reverse is finely enamelled with a design of white flowers with yellow centres and green foliage on a dark red ground. The armbands must have originally had an outer running border of pearls or emerald beads, now missing.

The jewel forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Bazuband Zamarrud Kalan

Gold set with emeralds
Deccan
19th century
W: 2.3 cm L: 19.5 cm
Weight: 132 gm
NJ 95.17/1-2

A pair of armbands (*bazuband*) in the form of a series of hinged geometrical plaques, each set with a large emerald in open-back gold mounts. The jewels would have originally been finished with an outer running pearl or emerald bead border.

The beautiful colour, large size and good condition of the stones used in these armbands imply that they were important items handled with immense care. Since precious gems were collected in large quantities, stones of different shapes, sizes and quality accumulated in the treasury. Although emeralds were most commonly cut as beads and cabochon stones, to minimise loss of weight and bulk, they were also fashioned as hexagonal and octagonal tablets. Since emeralds usually occur in hexagonal crystals, the hexagonal form was typical. Sometimes they were altered to an octagon merely by cutting away the minute tips of the two opposite corners. The emeralds used in these bracelets are flat tablets since it was customary to set amulet armbands and pendants with such gems. Emeralds are also very delicate and prone to scratches and breakage if they are not handled with care.

Stylistically, these ornaments are similar to the suite of turban jewels (NJ 95.72/1-5) and armbands (NJ 95.34/1-4) in the present collection. They were perhaps made to be given as gifts and form part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Taveez Zamarrud Dand

Gold set with an emerald and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
W: 2 cm L: 5.8 cm
Weight: 34 gm
NJ 95.134

An amulet (*taveez*) armband centering upon a large oval foiled *kundan*-set emerald flanked on either side with diamonds set in the form of a lotus flower. The reverse enamelled.

Simple jewels such as this example set with a single large gem, usually an emerald, were intended as amulets and worn for religious or health reasons. The back is exquisitely enamelled – the centre-piece with delicate white flowers with gold highlights on a deep red ground and the two side pieces delineating the lotus form in red and green enamel with flecks of blue and white. The enamelling provides valuable clues to dating. Based on the quality of workmanship, delicacy of the motifs and palette of colours, it is possible to assign dates by comparison with other dated pieces in collections around the world. The delicate floral patterns are reminiscent of the enamel work on an exquisite bangle set with rubies in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.[77]

The amulet forms part of the jewels assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Taveez Zamarrud Dand Ka

Gold set with an emerald and diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
W: 1.8 cm L: 5.7 cm
Weight: 21 gm
NJ 95.164

An amulet (*taveez*) armband centering upon a square foiled *kundan*-set emerald with pear-shaped diamonds on either side. The reverse enamelled with a design of red flowers with white highlights and parrot green foliage on a deep green ground.

Simple amulets such as this were usually made for religious purposes and worn by both men and women. Portrait miniatures of the Mughal emperors and rulers in the provincial courts feature such jewels, usually large single stones flanked by diamonds or pearls worn around the upper arm.

Emeralds were believed to have mystical powers. They were worn for their amuletic properties and also to obtain tranquility, wealth and intelligence. In Islam, it was believed that those who wore emeralds would enjoy the protection of God. The pure green colour of emeralds also aided eyesight. In fact, in the ancient world, lapidarists often kept an emerald on their work-table to relieve eye strain by gazing into the gem at intervals. This armband is among the jewels assigned to Gowhar Begum and forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Dastband Kanval Almas Khurd

Silver and gold set with diamonds
Hyderabad or Calcutta
19th century
W: 2.2 cm  Diam: 7.2 cm
Weight: 178 gm
NJ 95.84/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*dastband*), each in the form of 10 hinged graduating panels, set with fine oval rose-cut diamonds with small stones in the corners that serve as links to the next panel. The gems are all foiled and encased in grooved silver mounts in front, the reverse enclosed and rounded in thick sheet gold finely carved with a sun-burst design.

The 20 large diamonds are estimated to weigh approximately 150 carats. The rendering of symmetrical facets around the apex of a diamond, which has a broad, flat base was known as the rose-cut. Such techniques served the dual purpose of hiding internal flaws and enhancing the inherent brilliance of the gem. Since such gems were usually cleaved from large rough stones, they tend to be quite thick. Most of these gems have been re-cut in recent times, obliterating entire histories and the character of old-cut stones. Large rose-cut diamonds such as those set in these bracelets are rare surviving examples.

These bracelets were most likely made in Hyderabad, considering that such a fine assemblage of impressive gems must have originated in the Asaf Jah treasury of Golconda diamonds. The technique of using silver in the front and gold on the reverse is typical of the Deccan. However, they could have also been made in Calcuta by any of the reputed jewellers patronized by the Nizam of Hyderabad.

The Nizam's inventory of 1950 assigns a value of Rs 50,000 to the ornaments and they belong to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Dastband Almas Neem Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
Western India
19th century
W: 2.5 cm L: 25 cm
Weight: 202 gm
NJ 95.52/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*dastband*), each in the form of 11 hinged panels, centering upon a round flat table-cut diamond claw-set in partially enclosed grooved gold mounts. The panels on either side, set with pear-shaped gems interspersed with gem-set leaf-shaped links, gradually taper in size.

The flat, unfaceted diamond slices used in these bracelets are known as *parabs* in India. Small diamond slivers are a ubiquitous element of Mughal-style jewellery; these gems were only table-cut and foiled during setting to enhance their lustre. However, extraordinarily large stones such as the gems used in these bracelets and in a magnificent necklace (NJ 95.31) in the collection must have been obtained from what were once very big crystals. The Kollur mine in the Golconda region is reputed to have brought forth some really large stones – including the Koh-i-Nur and the Nizam diamond. It is likely that these gems are also from the same mine. The total weight of the diamonds in these bracelets is estimated to be in excess of 130 carats.

This pair of bracelets and the necklace are similarly fashioned and were perhaps made to be worn together. They have been wrongly classified as armbands (*bazuband*) in the inventory. The typical Western-style clasps indicate that they were in fact made to be worn as bracelets. They form part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Dastband Almas Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
India
Late 19th century
W: 2.8 cm  L: 17.5 cm
Weight: 150 gm
NJ 95.10/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*dastband*), each beautifully designed as a series of nine flower-heads claw-set with rose-cut diamonds and bordered on top and bottom with a row of diamonds. A single diamond is set into the loop clasp in each bracelet.

The open-back setting of these bracelets is typical of jewellery-making techniques popular in India in the late 19th century. The 276 Golconda diamonds weighing in excess of 50 carats obviously came from the Asaf Jah treasury. In workmanship, the bracelets are akin to a pair of emerald and diamond armbands (NJ 95.3/1-2) in the collection; these items might have been made around the same time and perhaps even by the same craftsman.

The bracelets have been assigned to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Dastband Murassa

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
Early 18th century
W: 1.5 cm  L: 21 cm
Weight: 161 gm
NJ 95.77/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*dastband*), each in the form of 12 rectangular hinged plaques with foiled table-cut diamonds embedded in pure gold. The reverse is polychrome enamelled.

These simple but elegant bracelets are fine specimens of Deccani workmanship. The rectangular and octagonal gold-work around the gems conforms to the shape of the diamonds. The reverse, gently rounded to a convex shape, is enamelled with bold red flowers with white centres and green leaves on a white ground and is quintessentially Deccani. These bracelets are similar to a turban ornament in the collection (NJ 95.81/1) and was perhaps made to be worn together. The Nizam's inventory of 1950 assigns a value of Rs 20,000 to this jewel and it forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Dastband Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds
Rajasthan or Deccan
Early 19th century
W: 2.2 cm  Diam: 10.5 cm
Weight: 621 gm
NJ 95.144/1-2

A pair of highly flexible articulated bracelets (*dastband*), each in the form of lozenge-shaped repeats *kundan*-set with old-cut diamonds, with diamond-set petal-shaped terminals at both ends. The pieces are linked on the reverse with a network of thick gold wires.

These ornaments are identical to another pair of bracelets in the collection (facing page) as well as a pair of anklets (NJ 95.169/1-2). In the inventory, however, they are all classified as anklets (*tora paon*). They were allocated to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Dastband Almas

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
19th century
W: 0.9 cm  L: 15 cm
Weight: 66 gm
NJ 95.74/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*dastband*), each comprising 13 hinged square panels, with foiled old-cut Golconda diamonds in a classic *kundan* setting within a green enamel border. The reverse polychrome enamelled.

Very few old-cut diamonds survive today, since countless gems have been prised out of their old settings and re-cut in the more modern idiom. The gems in this pair of bracelets are estimated to weigh in excess of 75 carats. It was stones such as these in the present collection that excited so many gem dealers when they were first offered for sale. The attention to detail and proportion is apparent in the manner in which the reverse is finished in a smooth convex curve and enamelled with red flowers and green leaves on a white ground. The bracelets are part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Dastband Almas

Gold set with diamonds
Rajasthan or Deccan
Early 19th century
W: 2.5 cm  Diam: 11.5 cm
Weight: 662 gm
NJ 95.159/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*dastband*), each *kundan*-set with foiled slivers of diamonds in lozenge-shaped repeats with pear-shaped diamond-set terminals. The pieces are linked on the reverse with gold wires.

Bracelets such as these, known as *sanklas*, were popular throughout north India and were made of silver in one piece in the lost-wax method. Although listed as anklets (*tora paon*) in the inventory, the small size of these pieces imply that they were most likely used as bracelets. These ornaments were assigned to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Sumran Zamarrud

Emerald beads strung on cord
Deccan
17th century
L: 19 cm
Weight: 45 gm
NJ 95.56/1-2

A pair of amulet bracelets (*sumran*), each strung with 10 graduated and faceted gourd-shaped emerald beads with emerald bead spacers.

These rare and exceptional emerald beads are of outstanding colour and clarity. The source of these gems is undoubtedly the New World – the Colombian emerald mines of Chivor or Muzo. Colombian emerald deposits at one time were the most important and exceptional in the world. Stones from these mines were richer in colour, of greater clarity and larger size than those from any other known mine. After being imported into India, the large gems were simply polished, drilled lengthwise, and strung as oblong beads.

In diverse cultures through history and all over the world, emeralds have been treasured as a symbol of eternal spring and immortality. To the Mughals, the gem represented paradise. The word 'emerald' is derived from the Persian term meaning 'green gem'. From the original Greek, it changed to the Latin *smaragdus*, then to *esmaurde*, *esmralde*, and in the 16th century to *esmeralde*.

In Deccani miniature paintings dating to the 18th century, royalty is often portrayed wearing similar amulet jewels as armbands instead of bracelets.

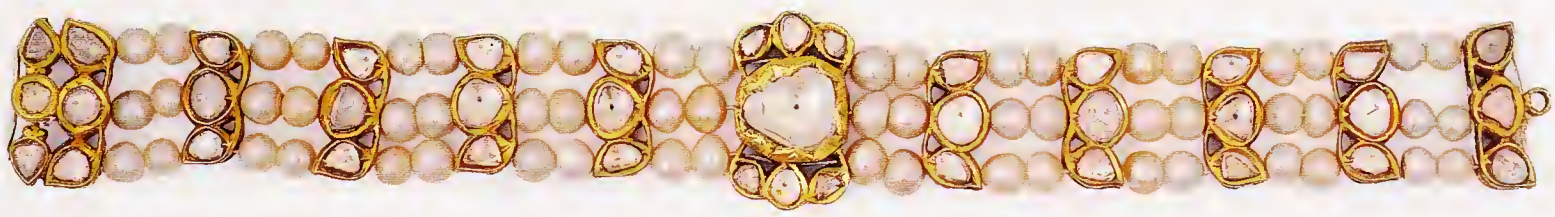
In the 1950 inventory a value of Rs 100,000 was assigned to these bracelets. They belong to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

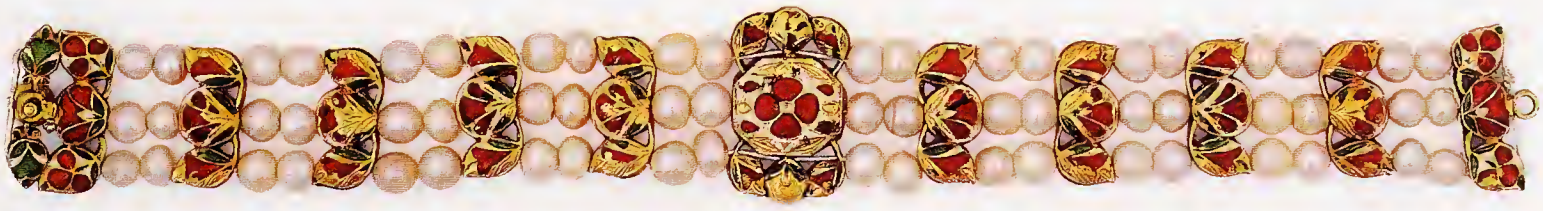
## Pahunchiyan Almas

Gold set with diamonds and pearls; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
L: 21.5 cm
Weight: 127 gm
NJ 95.167/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*pahunchiyan*), each centering upon a stylised lotus flower with a large pear-shaped table-cut diamond *kundan*-set in gold with clusters of three diamonds set on top and bottom and lotus-shaped repeats set with foiled table-cut diamonds on either side. The reverse of the pieces is enamelled with red and green floral motifs on a white ground.

The panels are strung on three rows of pearls. Judging by the vast areas of enamel loss, these pieces were probably extensively used. The thick *kundan* work around the gems and the fine finish of the jewels are testimony to their early date. The bracelets were allocated to Mehr-un-nissa Begum in the Sixth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.





## Pahunchiyan Almas

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Rajasthan or Deccan
19th century
W: 2 cm L: 18 cm
Weight: 202 gm
NJ 95.172/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*pahunchiyan*), each in the form of seven flower-head repeats *kundan*-set with 108 foiled table-cut diamonds with fan-shaped elements in-between. A cord passes through the loops on the reverse, holding the pieces together to form a flexible bracelet. The reverse is enamelled with floral motifs in red and green on a gold ground.

Such bracelets were used for everyday wear judging by the extensive areas of enamel loss. The bracelets are one of three practically identical pairs in the collection (facing page) and were perhaps used by a female member of the royal household. They form part of the collection of jewels allocated to Mehr-un-nissa Begum in the Sixth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Sumran Marvareed Larli Wa Almas

Gold set with diamonds, a spinel, spinel beads and pearls
Deccan or Calcutta
Early 20th century
W: 3.7 cm L: 17.3 cm
Weight: 157 gm
NJ 95.43/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*sumran*), each in the form of an open-work rectangular panel centering upon an oval step-cut spinel with pear-shaped old-cut diamond surrounds and another border of round diamonds; vertical borders set with tiny diamonds on either side strung with six rows of pearls and spinel beads and a clasp set with rose-cut marquise diamonds.

The gems are all claw-set in gold in a simple design. The bracelets might have been made in Calcutta in the early 20th century and are similar to the pearl necklace (NJ 95.38). The Nizam's inventory assigns a value of Rs 10,000 to them. Osman Ali Khan included these ornaments in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust, stipulating that they (along with the other items included in that section) could only be sold in the eventuality of a calamity befalling the family.

## Pahunchiyan Almas

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Rajasthan or Deccan
19th century
W: 2.5 cm L: 19 cm
Weight: 180 gm
NJ 95.157/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*pahunchiyan*) of floral design, each comprising a series of foiled table-cut diamond flower-heads with vertical intersections, with loops on the reverse for threading. The sides enamelled in green and the reverse with red and green flower motifs and delicate white highlights.

Such bracelets were standard ornament types throughout Mughal India and were intended for everyday use. Two other similar bracelets (facing page and below) are in the present collection. Such jewels intended for everyday use were made for female members of the royal household.

The pair illustrated here are among the jewels assigned to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Pahunchiyan Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Rajasthan or Deccan
19th century
W: 2.2 cm L: 19 cm
Weight: 169 gm
NJ 95.131/1-2

A pair of bracelets (*pahunchiyan*), each in the form of flower-head repeats *kundan*-set with 108 foiled table-cut diamonds with fan-shaped intersections, with loops on the reverse to facilitate threading the individual elements together. The edges of each piece are decorated with green enamel and the reverse rendered with red flowers, green leaves and white highlights on a gold ground.

Of typical Rajasthani design, variations of this basic form abound in traditional Indian jewellery. The individual elements threaded on cords resulted in flexibility and ease of wear. These bracelets are almost identical to two other pairs in the collection (facing page and above) and pieces such as these were obviously made in large quantities.

This pair is among the jewels assigned to Ekbal Begum and forms part of the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kangni Patri Almas

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the inside
Deccan
Early 19th century
Diam: 10.5 cm
Weight: 315 gm
NJ 95.155/1-3

A set of three bangles (*kangni*), the middle bangle decorated on the front with foiled table-cut diamonds in a foliate design, the back in a floral design with red and green enamel with white highlights on a gold ground, and a delicate line of blue and gold enamel on the sides. The two thinner bangles on either side are set with table-cut diamonds within foiled circular gold surrounds and the insides are enamelled with deep red flowers and green leaves on a white ground.

These large-sized bangles were assigned to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kangni Patri Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the inside
Deccan
Early 19th century
Diam: 8.5 cm
Weight: 188 gm
NJ 95.142/1-3

A set of three bangles (*kangni*), the middle bangle decorated on the front with foiled table-cut diamonds *kundan*-set in a single row, the reverse with red, green and white enamel in a floral design. The centre bangle is flanked on either side with thinner circlets, whose fronts are decorated with table-cut diamonds within foiled circular gold surrounds. The insides of these two narrow bangles are also enamelled with red and green foliage on a white ground.

The bangles were worn as a set of three and have been allocated to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Karay Dand Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the inside
Deccan
19th century
Diam: 9.5 cm
Weight: 269 gm
NJ 95.141/1-2

A pair of bangles (*karay*) *kundan*-set with foiled old-cut diamonds in a floral design on the front, the inside enamelled with a delicate design of red flowers and green leaves on a white ground. The bangles were allotted to Ekbal Begum and form part of the jewels in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Karay Dand Almas

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the inside
Deccan
18th century
Diam: 11.5 cm
Weight: 339 gm
NJ 95.156/1-2

A pair of bangles (*karay*), each decorated with foiled table-cut diamonds in a meandering foliage design on the front, the insides enamelled with bold red flowers and green leaves on a white ground.

The fine quality of Deccani workmanship is manifest in the detailing of the gold work and the enamel palette of rich and deep colours. Bold red flowers and green leaves are set against a white ground. Judging by their large size, they might even have been worn as anklets. They were allocated to Gowhar Begum and forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Kangni Patri Murassa

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the inside
Deccan
Early 19th century
Diam: 8.5 cm
Weight: 193 gm
NJ 95.168/1-3

A set of three bangles (*kangni*), the middle one decorated in front with *kundan*-set table-cut diamonds in a geometrical design, the insides with red flowers with white highlights and green leaves on a gold ground and a thin band of mauvish-blue enamel on the gold ground on the sides. The broad centre bangle is flanked on either side with thinner circlets, whose fronts are decorated with table-cut diamonds within foiled gold surrounds, the insides also enamelled with floral motifs in red, green and white.

These simple ornaments were undoubtedly made for everyday wear and they form part of the jewels allocated to Mehr-un-nissa Begum in the Sixth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Patri Navaratna

Gold set with the nine planetary gems
India
Early 20th century
Diam: 8.5 cm
Weight: 79 gm
NJ 95.97

A bangle (*patri*) with the nine planetary gems claw-set in gold, each gem interspersed with two small diamonds. Such jewels served a prophylactic purpose and were worn to ward off the evil eye. This bangle is among the jewels included in the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

# Anklets

## Paizeb Yakhoot Wa Almas Wa Zamarrud

Gold set with rubies, diamonds and emeralds
Deccan
19th century
W: 4.5 cm  Diam (at base): 12.5 cm
Weight: 592 gm
NJ 95.96/1-2

A magnificent pair of anklets (*paizeb*), each in the form of rectangular plaques decorated in the front with a design of flower-heads set with alternating diamond, emerald and ruby centres within rose-cut diamond cluster surrounds and a clasp with square table-cut emeralds. Two rows of rose-cut diamonds are pendant around the lower edge.

The total weight of the outstanding collection of Golconda diamonds in these anklets is estimated to be in excess of 250 carats. The open-work foliate design with gems set in claws and *a jour* settings combines modified Western workmanship and design sensibility with the sumptuousness and grandeur typical of so many of the jewels in the Asaf Jah collection. The intricate and finely-detailed gold work simulating a grilled screen at the back of the anklets reinforces the setting of the stones and enhances the durability of the jewel.

This opulent ornament could only have been made as a special commission drawing upon a vast assemblage of loose gems to permit matching for size, colour and clarity. The large number of rose diamonds used along the lower edge of the anklets is remarkable. The ornaments were perhaps made for a favourite wife of Mahboob Ali Pasha. Extremely valuable jewels like these were rarely handed over to the person for whom they were originally made. All such jewels were kept in the treasury and the treasurer maintained meticulous records including details of when the piece was worn, its condition and any special care required. Often, it was the treasurer who decided which set of jewels was to be worn and by whom. It was due to such rigid rules that these magnificent ornaments have survived.

The anklets are part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Paon Jaravi Almas Yakhoot Zamarrud

Gold set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds
Deccan
19th century
W: 3.7 cm  Diam: 10.5 cm
Weight: 790 gm
NJ 95.94/1-2

A pair of anklets (*tora paon*) in a design of symmetrically formed parallel rows of graduating old-cut Golconda diamonds, Colombian emeralds and Burmese rubies, claw-set in gold and bordered with a row of diamonds on top and at the bottom. The reverse with a floral trellis design is smoothly finished and flexible to facilitate ease of wear.

This pair of anklets like another spectacular pair set with diamonds, rubies and emeralds (facing page) brings together some of the finest gemstones in the collection. Meticulously matched for size, colour and quality, the 80 emeralds, 80 rubies and 288 diamonds that have been used in these anklets were undoubtedly carefully selected to achieve the gradation and symmetry seen.

Although the jewels have been attributed to the Deccan, on the presumption that they were crafted by the royal jeweller, they could have been made by a Bengali craftsman in Delhi, Calcutta or Bombay. Jewellery firms often employed workmen from all over India and especially Bengal, whose craftsmen excelled in technical skills. These workers used the technique best suited to the design of the jewel and the part of the body for which it was intended. They are included in the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Paizeb Yakhoot Wa Almas Wa Marvareed

Gold set with rubies, diamonds and pearls
Deccan
Late 19th–early 20th century
W: 4.7 cm  Diam (at base): 7.8 cm
Weight: 802 gm
NJ 95.95/1-2

A pair of anklets (*paizeb*), each in the form of hinged vertical repeats alternately set with old-cut diamonds and rubies, each panel with five graduating gems. A row of pearls along the top edge and gem-set pear-shaped pieces pendant below. The 70 pear-shaped diamonds along the lower edge are estimated to weigh approximately 200 carats while the 180 old-cut diamonds and rubies weigh about 150 and 200 carats respectively.

The elegant and simple design with claw-set diamonds and rubies in lightweight mounts is typical of the late 19th century. The Asaf Jah court drew jewellers from all over India, who excelled in adapting Western designs and manufacturing techniques to Indian ornaments. This pair of anklets is included in the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Paizeb Murassa

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
19th century
W: 5 cm  L: 36 cm
Weight: 758 gm
NJ 95.158/1-2

A pair of anklets (*paizeb*) composed of interlocked vertical plaques, each hinged into a long crescent shape when laid flat and set with old-cut diamonds with a row of pearls on top and a fringe of pear-shaped drops set with foiled diamonds along the lower edge. The reverse decorated with red and green foliage with highlights of mauvish-blue and white.

Such anklets combining *kundan*-set gems and enamelling on the reverse were generally made for all the important women of the royal household. This pair was assigned to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Paizeb Murassa

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
19th century
W: 6 cm  L: 31 cm
Weight: 750 gm
NJ 95.143/1-2

A pair of anklets (*paizeb*) composed of interlocked vertical plaques set with old-cut diamonds and each hinged to the next, with a crest of pearls along the upper edge and a fringe of pear-shaped drops set with foiled diamonds. The reverse is decorated with red and green foliage with highlights of mauvish-blue and white.

These anklets are typical Mughal-style jewels and were made with little variations in the basic design all across north India. The ornaments were assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Paon Murassa

Gold set with diamonds
Rajasthan or Deccan
18th century
W: 3 cm  Diam: 10 cm
Weight: 717 gm
NJ 95.169/1-2

A pair of flexible anklets (*tora paon*) each of crossover scroll design *kundan*-set on the front with 394 table-cut diamonds and pear-shaped foiled borders with diamond details. The inner side is interlinked with thick gold wires that impart the required flexibility to the jewel.

These elegant ornaments were worn tightly around the ankles together with a series of other elaborate anklets. Such jewels were often presented to nobles as a sign of royal favour and gratitude and were referred to as *ta'zim* or honour. In Rajasthan, silver anklets of similar design and construction devoid of gems were made in the lost-wax (*cire perdue*) method. Two pairs of bracelets (NJ 95.144/1-2 and NJ 95.159/1-2) in the present collection are identical to these anklets. These jewels have been allocated to Mehr-un-nissa Begum in the Sixth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

# Cufflinks and Buttons

## Gundiyan Zamarrud Kalan Almas

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds
India
Late 19th century
Diam (each button): 2.2 cm
Weight: 119 gm
NJ 95.18/1-7

A set of seven buttons (*gundiyan*), each claw-set in gold with a round rose-cut emerald surrounded with small old-cut diamonds. The Colombian emeralds together weigh approximately 75 carats and are of a superb deep green colour and clarity.

After diamonds, emeralds of outstanding quality are the most profusely used gems in the jewels that make up the Nizam's collection. In every ornament category, emeralds and emerald drops form an integral part of the design. This set of buttons is no exception.

In keeping with their importance and the value of the gems, the buttons form part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Yakhoot Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with rubies and diamonds
Deccan
Late 19th century
Diam (each button): 1.7 cm
Weight: 49 gm
NJ 95.46/1-7

A set of seven buttons (*gundiyan*), each in the design of a flower-head centrally set with a round faceted ruby surrounded with old-cut diamonds. The pigeon-blood rubies are most probably of Burmese origin and together are estimated to weigh 75 carats.

Gem-set buttons such as these were used on the long traditional Indian coats worn by men for ceremonial and formal occasions. Rulers usually had innumerable sets of buttons made with different gems which were matched with the colour of the brocaded textile of formal coats. The 1950 inventory assigns a value of Rs 50,000 to these buttons and they have been included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Cufflinks Kanval Almas Wa Zamarrud

Gold set with emeralds and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
L: 1.8 cm W:1.3 cm
Weight: 22 gm
NJ 95.14/1-2

A pair of cufflinks, each in the form of two gem-set pieces linked with a chain, claw-set with an oval step-cut deep green emerald surrounded with diamonds. The exquisite and fine quality Colombian emeralds totally weigh about 20 carats.

Mahboob Ali Pasha changed the dress code in the Hyderabad court. He was inclined to Western-style suits and typical English riding gear. Elegant cufflinks such as this pair were undoubtedly worn on formal evenings, when he played host to visiting European aristocracy. These jewels were included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Almas Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Diam (each button): 2 cm
Weight: 38 gm
NJ 95.47/1-6

A set of six buttons (*gundiyan*), each in the design of a flower-head, with eight old-cut diamonds, set in gold. The combined weight of the gems is estimated to be about 40 carats; however, they have been set in very lightweight mounts. The gems are of very fine quality and their colour and luminosity testify to their Golconda origin.

The wealth of the Nizams is evident from the fact that even commonplace items like buttons were made with gold and diamonds – elements that added to the overall glitter and grandeur of the wealthiest native state in India. These buttons form part of the jewels assigned to the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Kanval Almas

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Diam (each button): 1.7 cm
Weight: 78 gm
NJ 95.7/1-12

A set of twelve buttons (*gundiyan*), each in the form of a flower-head set with seven old-cut diamonds in gold. The diamonds totally weigh approximately 60 carats.

This simple floral design is typical of ear studs worn all over India. The setting, with the gems completely encased in gold box-type mounts devoid of any foiling or *lac*, is typical of south India. In fact, until the introduction of claw setting, gemstones were always mounted in closed settings. The prismatic effect of light trapped and reflected within the stones served to enhance the colour and brilliance of the gems.

In this technique, which is common even today, individual gold units corresponding to the design of the ornament are crafted from solid gold; holes are drilled to accommodate the stones, ensuring that the circumference of the cavities are kept slightly smaller than the gems; each stone is individually dropped into the cavity and gently tapped in; if necessary, the diameter of the hole is enlarged with a sharp tool until the gem sits almost flush with the surface. Once this is done, the gold around the edge of the gem is gently pushed to form a thin bezel which holds the stone firmly in place.

These buttons were obviously worn by the Nizam on traditional long Indian coats. They are among the jewels that form part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Marvareed

Gold set with button pearls and diamonds
India
Late 19th century
Diam (each button): 1.4 cm
Weight: 47 gm
NJ 95.121/1-6

A set of six buttons (*gundiyan*), each claw-set with a button pearl and a small diamond in the centre in an articulated flower-shaped gold mount.

Buttons such as these were generally sewn directly onto the jacket and removed when not in use. Button pearls have also been used in a magnificent pearl and diamond necklace (NJ 95.67) of similar design in the present collection.

They form part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Almas

Gold set with diamonds
Deccan
19th century
L: 21 cm
Weight: 15 gm
NJ 95.139

A set of three buttons (*gundiyan*) with table-cut diamonds claw-set in simple gold mounts and linked with a looped gold chain. These buttons were perhaps worn on a blouse and were allotted to Ekbal Begum. They are part of the jewels included in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Zamarrud Mai Cufflinks

Gold set with emeralds
Deccan
19th century
Different sizes
Weight: 27 gm
NJ 95.137/1-3

A pair of cufflinks and a button with emeralds set in gold. The cufflinks with *kundan*-set cabochon emeralds carved in the shape of a mango; the button with a table-cut emerald in a simple round claw-setting. The emeralds exhibit the lovely deep green colour characteristic of Colombian gems.

This set was assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Mai Cufflinks Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with emeralds, emerald beads and diamonds
Deccan
Early 20th century
Different sizes
Weight: 24 gm
NJ 95.35/1-7

A set of two cufflinks and five graduated buttons set in gold. The cufflinks in the form of two pieces linked with a gold chain, one side set with a round emerald surrounded with tiny diamonds and the other side with a single old-cut diamond weighing approximately 15 carats each. Each of the five buttons are claw-set with a pumpkin-shaped emerald bead and surmounted with a small diamond.

This set forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Cufflinks Mai Gundiyan Zamarrud

Gold set with emeralds
Deccan
Early 20th century
Diam (emeralds in cufflinks): 1.3 cm
Weight: 25 gm
NJ 95.173/1-3

A set of cufflinks and one button, each claw-set in gold with a round step-cut emerald, totally estimated to weigh about 15 carats. The green Colombian gems used in these ornaments are all pierced through with a hole indicating that they were used in different settings earlier. They might have been used with gold pins as buttons prior to being set into gold mounts. They are part of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Gundiyan Almas Neem Kanval

Gold set with diamonds
Western India
19th century
Diam (each button): 2 cm
Weight: 69 gm
NJ 95.8/1-6

A set of six buttons (*gundiyan*), each with a large, fine quality old-cut Golconda diamond claw-set in gold in partially closed grooved gold mounts. This kind of setting is evident in several pieces in the collection, including the magnificent diamond necklace (NJ 95.31) and a pair of beautiful bracelets (NJ 95.52/1-2). They might have all been made by the same craftsman and were probably intended to be worn together. Such buttons were usually sewn onto the long brocaded coat (*sherwani*) worn for *durbars* and state functions. The buttons belong to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

# Watch Chains

## Tora Ghariyal Almas Kanval

Gold set with diamonds and rubies
India
19th century
L: 44 cm H (pendant): 10.5 cm
Weight: 93 gm
NJ 95.61

A watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) centering upon an elaborate pendant designed like a European corsage ornament set with pear-shaped and round diamonds with stylised birds suspending pear-shaped gems, flanked on either side with pear-shaped diamonds surrounded with smaller stones, with a star in the centre; the ribbon bow surmount set with rubies and diamonds and crowned with a stylized lotus. On either side, the chain symmetrically set with diamonds in hinged mounts. A big gold hook is attached to the reverse of the bow to attach the pendant to the pocket or button-hole. The 433 old-cut Golconda diamonds that constitute this jewel are estimated to weigh approximately 90 carats.

Pocket watches became fashionable among Indian royalty in the late 19th and early 20th century. Cartier's foray into India, in fact, commenced with the sale of pocket watches to the maharajas after the Delhi durbar in 1911.[78] Even prior to this, watches were being imported for sale in India by European jewellery establishments in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta.[79] Watch chains such as this example were made to suspend the watch at one end, while the elegant pendant usually rested outside the pocket.

This piece dates to the reign of Mahboob Ali Pasha, who was the first Nizam to wear Western-style clothes. He often purchased jewels from various vendors and this might have been one such item. However, Indian artisans had not only acquired the requisite skills of claw-setting gems in lightweight mounts, but mastered the art to the extent that it is very difficult to distinguish between workshop-made pieces and those crafted by the home jeweller. In design and workmanship, it is similar to a fabulous diamond necklace (NJ 95.106) in the collection.

The inventory of 1950 records a value of Rs 100,000 for the watch chain. It has been assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Ghariyal Almas Wa Kanval Wa Zamarrud

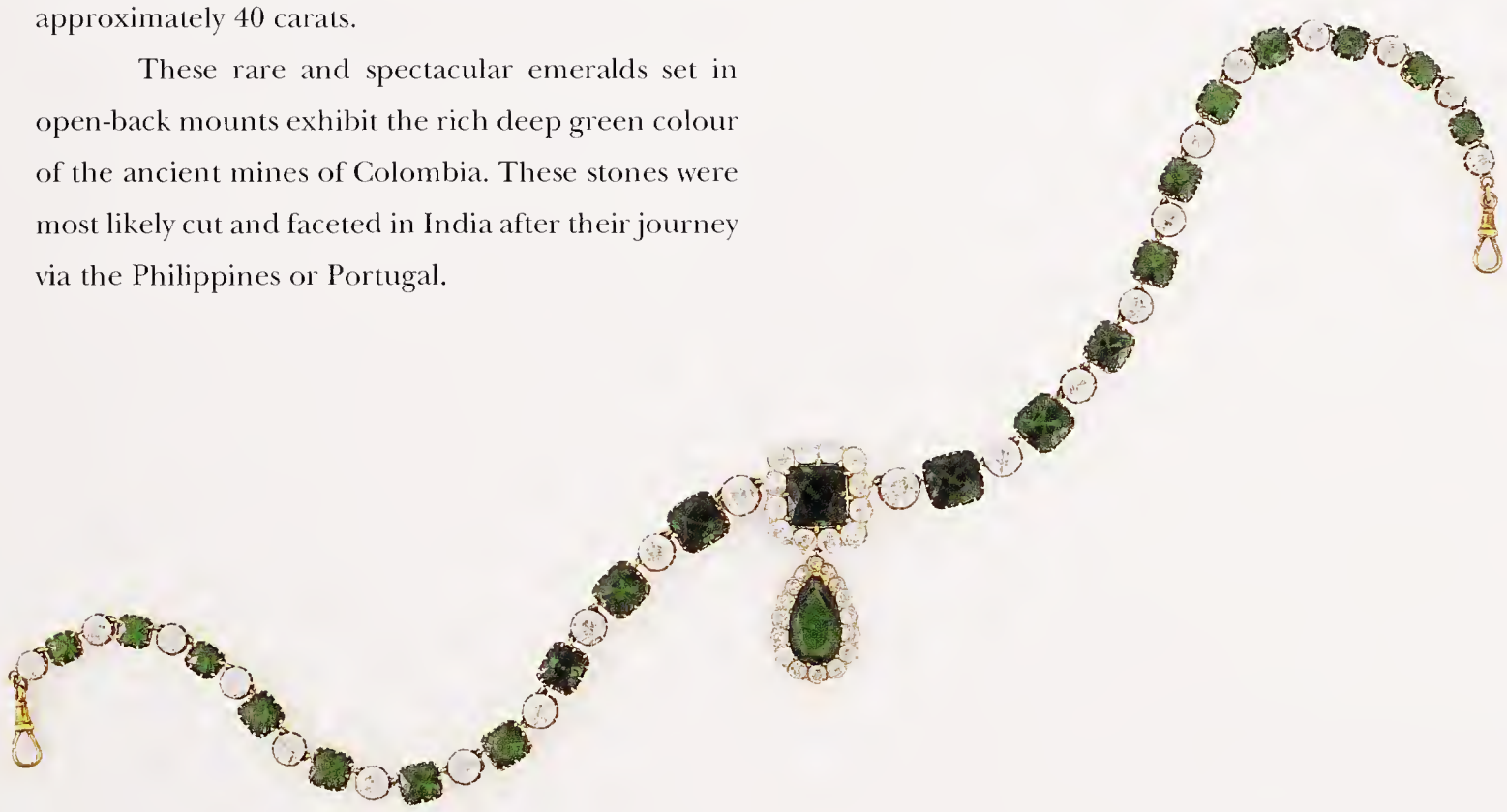
Gold set with diamonds and emeralds
Deccan
19th century
L: 28 cm
Weight: 87 gm
NJ 95.13

A breathtaking watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) centering upon a large square emerald more than 10 carats in weight surrounded with diamonds, suspending a pear-shaped emerald of approximately 18 carats set within a diamond surround. The chain on either side alternating 10 square step-cut emeralds and round old-cut Golconda diamonds, all claw-set in gold. The diamonds weigh about 50 carats while the graduating emeralds are estimated to weigh approximately 40 carats.

These rare and spectacular emeralds set in open-back mounts exhibit the rich deep green colour of the ancient mines of Colombia. These stones were most likely cut and faceted in India after their journey via the Philippines or Portugal.

In the inventory, it is listed as a necklace (*kanthi*). However, the two watch clasps at either end and the presence of a long hook on the reverse of the centre-piece indicate that it was used as a watch chain. Perhaps, due to the magnificence and importance of the jewel, it was sometimes worn as a necklace.

This item forms part of the important Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.



## Tora Ghariyal Kanval Almas Wa Marvareed

Gold set with a diamond, diamond beads and pearls
Deccan
19th century
L: 26 cm  H (baroque pearl): 2 cm
Weight: 30 gm
NJ 95.19

A rare and unusual watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) with faceted diamond beads and pearls linked with twisted gold wire with an impressive mango-shaped baroque pearl suspended.

The prime characteristics that set pearls apart from all other gems are iridescence, luminosity and shape; gems of unusual form known as baroque pearls were particularly sought after. The exquisite large pearl seen in this chain – in the shape of a mango which was a popular Indian motif – must have been eagerly acquired for the Asaf Jah treasury.

The precise area of origin of this gem is difficult to ascertain. However, for centuries, the waters around Bahrain in the Persian Gulf and the seas off the Gulf of Mannar on the east coast of India were the sites of ancient pearl fisheries. According to scholars, the pearls of India, particularly those in the Gulf of Mannar, "were long considered the most beautiful on earth ...typically valued at three times their weight in gold."[80] Although considerably depleted due to over-exploitation, a news items in the *Times of India* of February 1, 1890, testifies that these fisheries were still active in the late 19th century. The report states, "The pearl fishery has been well started. Oysters are plentiful on the banks. Prices are ruling low, there being a scarcity of buyers.[81]

Pearls were one of the most prized items in the Indo-Arab trade across the Persian Gulf – trade that was particularly active in Hyderabad. India was the principal destination for vast quantities of these pearls. Such staggering amounts of pearls were amassed by the Nizams of Hyderabad that loose pearls were stored in buckets in their treasury.

"The pearl's association with sexual paradise extended to Islam as well. Islamic iconography employed the pearl as a symbol of heavenly sexual fulfillment. When the faithful died, they were encased in a pearl or surrounded by masses of pearls. There, they lived forever with their *houri*, the beautiful women who in Islamic belief accompany the blessed after death."[82] For centuries, a common belief was that pearls "conferred great vitality upon their owners."[83]

In spite of the immense quantities of pearls amassed in India, little has survived. This can be attributed to the fact that due to their organic nature, pearls have a tendency to become brittle and decay over long periods of time. In fact, the term for pearls in the Vedas (ancient Indian sacred texts) is *krsana*, derived from *krs* or that which becomes emaciated.

Pearls appear in profusion in the Asaf Jah collection and very few ornaments are without pearls. In the late 19th century, large pearls of lustrous quality were commanding prices sometimes four times that of diamonds of equal weight. The diamond beads in this chain are from the Golconda mines, merely faceted to retain their maximum weight. Beads such as these have also been used in two necklaces (NJ 95.67 and NJ 95.108) in the collection.

This watch chain has been included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Ghariyal Mothi Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with pearls and diamonds
Bombay or Calcutta
Late 19th century
L: 30 cm
Weight: 193 gm
NJ 95.40

A watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) centering upon a flower-head set with a pearl and surrounded with diamond petals, the chain on either side alternating button pearls and diagonals set with small diamonds. The flower-head with three lockets attached – a musical instrument, a heart-shaped amulet case and a square photograph holder – all similarly set with pearls and diamonds. The two chains can be separated from the centre-piece and worn as a necklace.

The design and setting of this piece is of European inspiration and clearly manifests the characteristic features of late 19th century craftsmanship. The Basra pearls are estimated to weigh in excess of 600 *chows*.

In India, pearls are always weighed in *tolas* (one *tola* = 11.6 grams) and *chows*. According to Hans Nadelhoffer, "the reddish-black seeds of the *Abrus precatorius* fixed the Indian *rati* as a measurement for pearls. The Indian *rati* = 7/8 carats = 3½ grains. The pearls were weighed in *rati*, which was then converted into *chows*; 60 *chows* = 36 grains. To make the situation even more complicated, a Bahrain *chow* equalled 4 Basra *chows*, which were the same as 5 Poonah *chows*, the only measurement valid in Bombay."[84]

The Asaf Jah inventory of 1950 assigns a value of Rs 25,000 to this watch chain. The ornament forms part of the items assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Ghariyal Jaravi Meenakari

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on both sides
England
Late 19th century
Diam: 5 cm
Weight: 167 gm
NJ 95.117

A gold and enamelled chronograph watch (*ghariyal*), with four dials displaying the months of the year, days of the week, the sun and moon and the time. The covers are decorated with a scrolling pattern of minuscule diamonds and enamelled in red and green. The watch is inscribed with the maker's mark of Cooke & Kelvey, Calcutta, an English firm established to cater to Europeans in India. In the latter half of the 19th century, their clientele consisted primarily of Indian princes.

This watch forms part of the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Ghariyal Almas Wa Marvareed

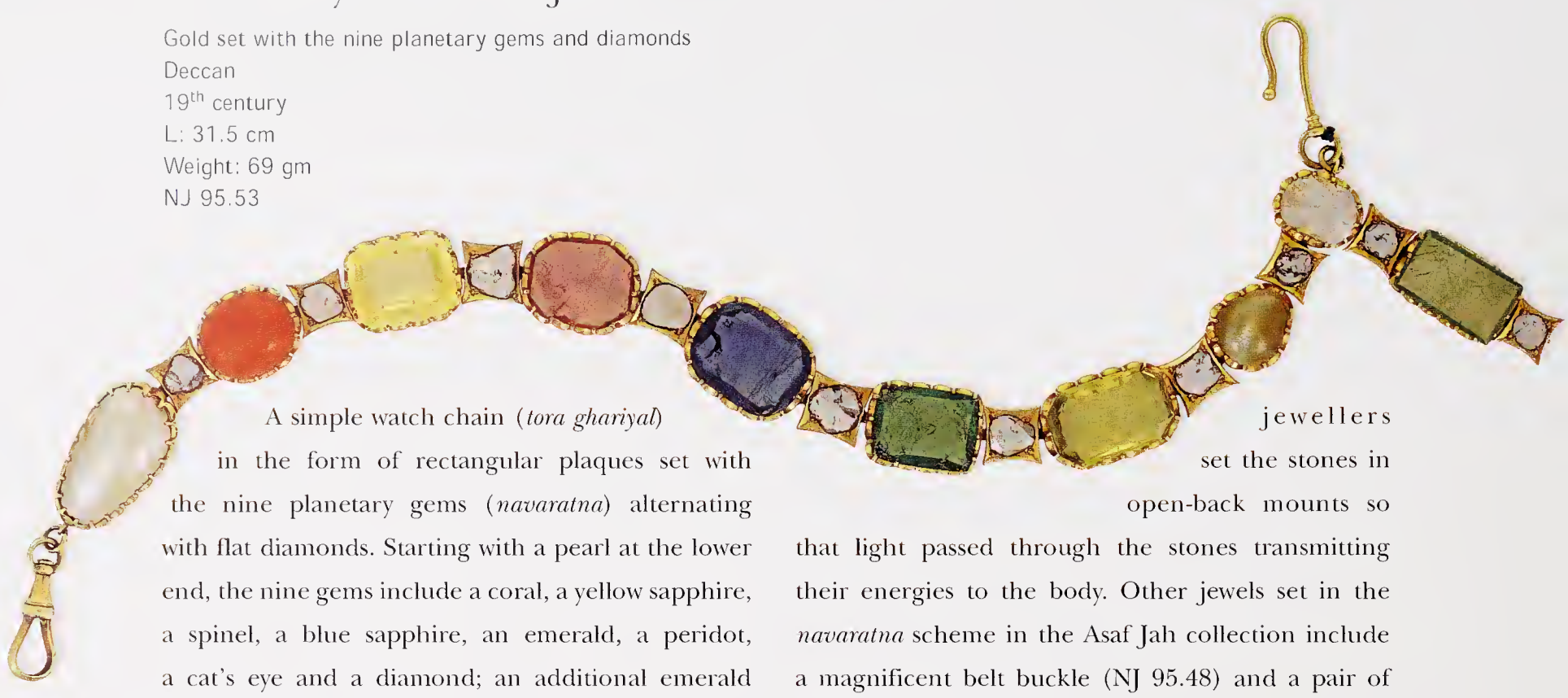
Gold set with pearls, diamonds and emerald beads
Bombay or Calcutta
Late 19th century
L: 38 cm
Weight: 54 gm
NJ 95.118

A watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) alternating button pearls and diamond-set elements suspending a flower-head with pearl centre and diamond petal surrounds, and a tassel comprising three pearls and diamonds with a *taveez*-shaped diamond bead and emerald beads at the end. In design and workmanship, the chain is typically European. Such items were no doubt made in large numbers to cater to the demand for watch chains in late 19th century princely India.

This ornate watch chain is among the jewels included in the First Schedule, Part II, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Ghariyal Navaratna Jaravi

Gold set with the nine planetary gems and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
L: 31.5 cm
Weight: 69 gm
NJ 95.53



A simple watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) in the form of rectangular plaques set with the nine planetary gems (*navaratna*) alternating with flat diamonds. Starting with a pearl at the lower end, the nine gems include a coral, a yellow sapphire, a spinel, a blue sapphire, an emerald, a peridot, a cat's eye and a diamond; an additional emerald is pendant near the hook.

To attain the maximum benefit of the prophylactic powers of the nine gems, Indian jewellers set the stones in open-back mounts so that light passed through the stones transmitting their energies to the body. Other jewels set in the *navaratna* scheme in the Asaf Jah collection include a magnificent belt buckle (NJ 95.48) and a pair of armbands (NJ 95.73/1-2).

This watch chain forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Ghariyal Zamarrud Munni

Gold set with emerald beads
Deccan
Late 19th century
L: 24 cm
Weight: 66 gm
NJ 95.57

A watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) centering upon a large round claw-set emerald weighing approximately 40 carats, the chain on both sides with emerald beads linked with thick gold wire. The fine quality Colombian emeralds enhance an otherwise simple accessory for a pocket watch.

The watch chain forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Ghariyal Kanval Almas

Gold set with diamonds
Bombay or Calcutta
Early 20th century
L: 33.5 cm
Weight: 107 gm
NJ 95.6

A watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) in the form of hinged plaques set in front and the reverse with minuscule diamonds, with larger gems forming the centres of the design. From a broad centre-piece, the chain tapers in a symmetrical design on either side to the clasps at both ends.

The design and setting are very European. This piece was perhaps purchased from ready stock from one of the Western jewellery establishments in Bombay or Calcutta, by Mahboob Ali Pasha in the early 20th century. The watch chain has been included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Tora Ghariyal Zamarrud Munni

Gold set with emerald beads
Deccan
Late 19th century
L: 21 cm
Weight: 55 gm
NJ 95.50

A simple watch chain (*tora ghariyal*) with 43 pumpkin-shaped emerald beads weighing approximately 150 carats linked with thick gold wire. A pocket watch was suspended at one end of the chain, while the other end was usually clasped to the waist belt; the horizontal rod-like piece was passed through the button-hole. The chain is strung with lovely deep green Colombian emeralds that have been carved into beads in India. This accessory forms part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

# Rings

## Angushtari Zamarrud

Gold set with a carved emerald; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
Diam (including setting): 3 cm  Emerald: 1.8 x 2.5 cm
Weight: 12 gm
NJ 95.119

An unusual ring (*angushtari*) set in a pierced gold mount with a rectangular emerald weighing approximately 20 carats and carved on both sides. The front with a flowering lotus bloom with leaves and a chevron border around the four sides, the reverse also with a design of a similar flowering plant. The composition of the flowers and leaves is perfectly positioned in the centre of the surface of the gem and rendered with exquisite detail and smoothly flowing lines. The simplicity and naturalistic treatment of the carving and the motifs permit an 18th century dating. To protect this fragile gem, the back is not open, but has a gold cut-work scroll design decorated with green enamel in order to show the carving. The band is also carved with a pierced trellis design and decorated with red and green enamel.

This emerald belongs to a small group of carved Indian gemstones in the world. The Mughals perpetuated the practice of carving emeralds with floral motifs and inscriptions. Designs were selected after consultation with astrologers, and inscriptions were added to immortalise lineage. This carved gem, originally set in an armband, might in fact have been given to one of the early Nizams as a gift from the Mughal emperor in Delhi.

For example, in 1700, in recognition of his capture of Parali near Bijapur, Aurangzeb presented a ring to Mir Qamaruddin, the first Nizam (who had been awarded the title Chin Qilich Khan). In a letter to his Prime Minister, the emperor instructs: "The ring with an emerald collet which last night I selected for Qilich Khan is not engraved. Now I remember that his (full) title is Chin Qilich Khan. You should write to the Darogha of the jewelry department to call an engraver to get the ring engraved with all his titles and then to send it to the above-mentioned Khan."[85]

This ring forms part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Angushtari Larli

Gold set with a spinel and diamonds
India
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.5 cm
Weight: 12 gm
NJ 95.120

A ring (*angushtari*) centrally set with an octagonal step-cut beautiful pink spinel within an old-cut diamond frame with a plain gold band.

The ring rests in its own specially made velvet box with the name 'Vilcassim Bros, Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, Jewellers & Tailors' printed on the inside lid. The ring was most likely sold to Mahboob Ali Pasha or Osman Ali Khan by this firm.

During visits to Bombay, the Nizam stayed in his palatial palace Hyderabad House on top of Malabar Hill. The Taj Mahal hotel often served as second home to many rulers and the shops in the hotel were patronised by the elite. The archives of the Taj Mahal Hotel could not shed any light on Vilcassim Bros. However, according to old-timers still doing business in the hotel, a Sri Lankan jeweller called Mr Jalal had an establishment in the hotel in the early years of the 20th century. The spinel is perhaps from Sri Lanka and might have been sold to the Nizam by Mr Jalal.

The ring is included in the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Zamarrud Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with an emerald and diamonds
India
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.3 cm  Emerald: 1.5 x 1.3 cm
Weight: 11 gm
NJ 95.23

A ring (*angothi*) centrally claw-set with a hexagonal Colombian table-cut emerald in an open-back gold mount framed within a border of old-cut diamonds. The shoulders of the ring on each side are set with three diamonds over a bifurcated hoop. The deep green gem is estimated to weigh almost 10 carats.

This ring and three other emerald-set rings (NJ 95.85, NJ 95.86 and NJ 95.87) in the collection were evidently considered important by Mir Osman Ali Khan. The original trust deed lists five rings of which one, perhaps the most spectacular piece, was meant to be worn by the Nizam on ceremonial occasions. The trust stipulated that the ring should be handed over along with other regalia items to Osman Ali Khan's grandson and heir Prince Mukkaram Jah after the abolition of titles and privy purses.

This elegant ring is part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Zabarjad Gehra Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with an alexandrite and diamonds
India
19th century
Diam (including setting): 3.3 cm
Weight: 34 gm
NJ 95.65

An extraordinary ring (*angothi*) centrally set with a rare faceted alexandrite weighing approximately 35 carats in an open-back gold setting, the broad shoulders and sides of the gem carved with an open-work trellis design set with 12 old-cut diamonds. The inside of the gold band bears the inscription 'ORR 22'. It was obviously made by the Madras-based jewellers P Orr & Sons for Mahboob Ali Pasha. The number 22 refers to the purity of the gold.

Peter Nicholas Orr established the firm of P Orr & Sons in Madras in 1849. The company manufactured European-style jewellery, watches and scientific instruments and gained repute for *swami* jewellery (jewellery bearing the image of Hindu deities worked in repoussé on sheet gold). In the catalogue of the Indian Art Exhibition held in Delhi in 1903, P Orr & Sons was described by George Watt as "the pioneering manufacturing firm in India" having "the largest and best appointed establishment of its kind."[86] In its heydey, the firm employed a vast number of Indian artisans.

Extant records in the India Office Library corroborate that in May 1885 (barely one year after Mahboob attained majority), Frederick Emery, one of the partners of P Orr & Sons, received a commission worth £3,000 from Mahboob Ali Pasha. In 1888, Emery was once again summoned to Hyderabad as a guest of the 'King of the Deccan', and accommodated in a magnificent suite in the 'Old Palace'. In a letter to his mother, Emery states with pride: "I am assured that I am the first and only European coming here on business that His Highness ever entertained and it is considered quite an honour and a grand mark of distinction." He goes on to say, "I was summoned to His Highness just past midnight soon after my arrival from a 540 mile journey, had no time to wash or dress but had to go as I was in my travelling dress. I was ushered into the King's chamber and remained with him 40 minutes, and had a very satisfactory business interview with him."[87] The precise nature of the business and the commissions received by Emery on behalf of P Orr & Sons have not been recorded. However, having accorded Emery the rare honour of his hospitality, Mahboob Ali Pasha's order must have been quite impressive.

A ring set with an alexandrite definitely qualifies as an 'impressive' order. Alexandrites are one of the world's rarest gems. The gemstone was reportedly discovered in the Russian Ural mountains on Czar Alexander II's birthday in 1830, and hence its name. The characteristic feature of the gem is that it changes colour from emerald green in natural light to a brownish-red in artificial light. Sri Lanka, known to the ancient world as Ratnapura or the Island of Gems, was another principal source of alexandrites and the larger stones are believed to have come from Sri Lanka. This large alexandrite is possibly the only one of its kind in the world and, given the trade in gems between India and Sri Lanka, is most likely to be from this source.

There are no records to ascertain if the stone was already in the Hyderabad treasury or if P Orr & Sons supplied the gem to Mahboob Ali Pasha. However, the sixth Nizam was a buyer of beautiful gemstones and it is more than likely that the Madras firm sold him this important ring already set with this rare and beauiful gem.[88]

The ring is included in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Chalła Yakhoot Teen Nagi

Gold set with rubies
India
19th century
Diam: 2.4 cm
Weight: 41 gm
NJ 95.29

A striking ring (*challa*) in the form of a thick broad gold band embedded with three faceted rubies totally weighing more than 10 carats. The rubies are of exceptional colour and quality and their origin is undoubtedly the mines of Burma.

The ring is inscribed with the number '22' on the inside of the band, indicating the purity of the gold. It was perhaps made by a foreign jewellery firm, since it was not the practice of Indian craftsmen to mark the quality of the gold they used. Another identical ring, set with diamonds (below), seems to have been made by the same jeweller.

Mahboob Ali Pasha, the sixth Nizam, was obviously extremely fond of these two rings, since a rare photograph shows him wearing both of them on the ring finger of his right hand (page 46).

This ruby ring is included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Challa Almas Kanval Teen Nagi

Gold set with diamonds
India
19th century
Diam: 2.2 cm
Weight: 40 gm
NJ 95.28

An elegant ring (*challa*) in the form of a broad and heavy band of gold embedded with three old-cut diamonds totally weighing about 12 carats. The ring is striking in its simplicity – the solid gold devoid of any decoration acting as a perfect foil for the beautiful gems from the Golconda mines.

In the absence of any markings, it becomes difficult to establish where and by whom the ring might have been made. An identical ring, set with rubies (above), bears an inscription on the inside of the gold band indicating the purity of gold used. This ring bears no such inscription. However, the design and workmanship are so alike that the two rings must have been made by the same jeweller at the same time.

Mahboob Ali Pasha obviously had a fondness for rings, since he can be seen wearing both these jewels in a photograph (page 46).

This ring forms part of the jewels assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Zabarjad Wa Kanval Almas

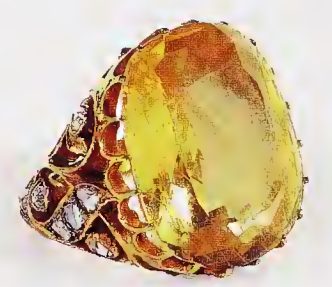
Gold set with a peridot and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 3 cm  Peridot: 2.1 x 1.7 cm
Weight: 18 gm
NJ 95.63

A ring (*angothi*) centrally set with an oval peridot in an open-back gold mount with old-cut diamonds forming a border below the gem, and the shoulders with a carved and pierced foliage design set with diamonds. The Nizams of Hyderabad were very fond of peridots and several ornaments are set with this gem from Sri Lanka. The most spectacular peridots in the collection are those set into a buckle (NJ 95.11).

This ring is part of the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Pukhraj

Gold set with a yellow sapphire and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.5 cm
Weight: 21 gm
NJ 95.64



A ring (*angothi*) centrally set with a yellow sapphire in a scalloped claw mount, the open-work shoulders set with small old-cut diamonds. The yellow sapphire, known in India as *pukhraj*, usually forms one of the nine planetary gems and was worn for astrological reasons. In accordance with popular belief, this ring was perhaps made and worn for good health or to mitigate the hostile effects of planets.

The ring is included in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Zamarrud Mai Kanval Almas

Gold set with an emerald and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 3 cm  Emerald: 1.5 x 1.2 cm
Weight: 21 gm
NJ 95.87

A ring (*angothi*) claw-set with a rectangular faceted emerald in an open-back mount in a frame of old-cut diamonds, the shoulders carved with a pierced trellis design. The emerald, of yellowish green colour, is estimated to weigh about 15 carats. Emeralds are extremely brittle and prone to abrasions on the surface, if not cared for, which renders the gem opaque. This gem shows evidence of considerable wear and was obviously a favourite of the Nizam. The Nizam's inventory, prepared in 1950, assigns a modest value of  Rs 10,000 to the ring. It belongs to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Zamarrud Mai Kanval Almas

Gold set with an emerald and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.8 cm  Emerald: 1.4 x 1.6 cm
Weight: 23 gm
NJ 95.86

A ring (*angothi*) set with a square faceted emerald weighing approximately 20 carats in an open-back claw mount within a frame of old-cut diamonds. The emerald is of outstanding quality and colour. Today, it is extremely difficult to find Colombian emeralds of this size and clarity in their original 19th century setting. Emeralds such as this one must have been acquired for the Asaf Jah treasury in the 18th century, when the Nizams became the principal buyers of gemstones after the decline of the Mughal empire. Five important emerald rings[89] were assigned by Mir Osman Ali Khan to the trust. Of these, the one that was categorized as state regalia was handed over to Osman's successor, his grandson Mukkaram Jah, as stipulated in the trust.

This beautiful ring was valued for Rs 125,000 in 1950 and forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Zamarrud Mai Kanval

Gold set with emerald and diamonds
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.5 cm  Emerald: 2 x 2 cm
Weight: 22 gm
NJ 95.85

A ring (*angothi*) set with a single large square table-cut emerald in an open-back claw setting. The shoulders are finely carved with a floral trellis design and a star and crescent moon set with minuscule diamonds. This exquisite emerald of outstanding colour and quality weighs about 15 carats. The elegant setting enhances the size of the stone and the deep green colour that Colombian gems are renowned for. The inside is inscribed with the letters 'f 255 cmts'.

The Nizams acquired emeralds in keeping with their wealth and status. For a long time, there was much speculation about the exact source of the emeralds imported into India. Due to their circuitous journey, these stones were generally referred to as 'New Mine' gems, as against a previous unidentified 'Old Mine' source. In a study published in the *Science* issue of January 28, 2000, researchers of the Institut de Recherche pour le Dévelopement and the Centre de Recherches Pétrographiques et Géochimiques – CNRS in Vandoeuvre, France, used an oxygen isotope 'fingerprinting' technique to reveal the extent of the Spanish trade in emeralds after their conquest of the 'New World'. The study included "18th century emeralds from the treasury of the Nizam, princely rulers of the former state of Hyderabad in India." Isotope analysis showed that these prized stones came from three separate mines in Colombia, and there were indications that the trade in emeralds from the New World made rapid and significant inroads into Europe and the Near East.[90]

The ring has been assigned to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angushtari Almas Kanval

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.2 cm
Weight: 9 gm
NJ 95.104/2

A ring (*angushtari*) with a diamond weighing approximately 7.5 carats set in a carved gold mount showing the size of the gem to advantage.

The ring forms part of the jewels assigned to the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

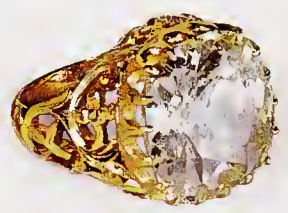
## Angushtari Almas Kanval

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2 cm
Weight: 15 gm
NJ 95.104/3

A very simple gold ring (*angushtari*) with a light yellow diamond weighing approximately 9 carats claw-set in a heavy gold mount with a bifurcated band. The old-cut Golconda diamond of good lustre and quality. The ring is included in the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Angushtari Almas Kanval

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2 cm
Weight: 11 gm
NJ 95.104/1



A ring (*angushtari*) set with a round old-cut diamond of light yellow colour weighing about 14 carats. The gem sits in a scalloped carved claw-mount with an open-work trellis design on the sides. The ring is part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Kanval Almas

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 3.2 cm  Diamond: 1.3 x 1.4 cm
Weight: 17 gm
NJ 95.24

A simple gold ring (*angothi*) set with a slightly oval golden-coloured diamond weighing about 10 carats in a thick and heavy gold band. The ring is inscribed on the inside with the letters 'ORR 18'. Like the two other identical rings (below), this one is also made by P Orr & Sons,[91] the Madras based firm of jewellers. It is included among the jewels in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angushtari Almas Kanval

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2 cm
Weight: 11 gm
NJ 95.104/4

A plain gold ring (*angushtari*) with a light golden-coloured diamond of approximately 5 carats claw-set in a gold mount with a simple band. The ring is inscribed 'ORR' on the inside which indicates that it was made by P Orr & Sons, Madras. This ring is identical to two others in the collection (above and below) made by the same firm.[92] It is part of the First Schedule, Part I, of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Kanval Almas

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.5 cm  Diam (diamond): 1.4 cm
Weight: 16 gm
NJ 95.25

A strikingly simple gold ring (*angothi*) claw-set with a round old-cut diamond weighing about 10 carats. The stone has a subtle yellow colour and exhibits the lustre of a Golconda gem. The inside of the band is inscribed 'ORR 18' indicating that the ring was made by the Madras firm P Orr & Sons and that the purity of the gold is 18 carats. This piece and several other rings in the collection were all made by the same firm, obviously for Mahboob Ali Pasha.[93]

Jewellery establishments like P Orr & Sons were originally set up to cater to Europeans resident in India. They soon realized that India's princes formed their largest clientele and directed their skills at fulfilling the insatiable demand for precious, high value and beautiful ornaments by the maharajas. The Nizam was one of their principal customers.

The ring belongs to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Kanval Almas

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 3 cm
Weight: 13 gm
NJ 95.62

A ring (*angothi*) set with a single round brilliant-cut diamond in a simple gold mount, the band carved with a scrolling trellis design. The fine quality gem weighs approximately 9 carats. Of the five similar diamond rings that were listed in the trust deed, one was meant to be worn for ceremonial functions and is no longer in the collection. This ring and the other three, all set with diamonds (NJ 95.24, NJ 95.25 and NJ 95.26), could only be sold in an extreme emergency. The Nizam's inventory assigns a value of Rs 25,000 to the ring and it has been allocated to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Lehsania Wa Kanval Almas

Gold set with a cat's eye and diamonds
Deccan
Late 19th century
Diam (including setting): 2 cm Cat's eye: 2 x 1.4 cm
Weight: 16 gm
NJ 95.27

A striking ring (*angothi*) set with a spectacular oval cat's eye, weighing approximately 25 carats, in the centre and surrounded by 19 old-cut diamonds in a simple gold mount with an undecorated band.

The cat's eye is most likely from Sri Lanka, the land of gems. It is rarely set in a jewel by itself, but forms one of the nine planetary gems (*navaratna*) worn to combat negative planetary influences.

A casual reference during the sensational 'Jacob diamond' court trial to the sale of a cat's eye by Babu Pannalal, a Bombay based jewellery and gem dealer who frequently did business with Mahboob Ali Pasha, might shed light on the provenance of this beautiful gem. The sale invoked the ire of Alexander Malcolm Jacob who wished to be the sole seller of gems to the Nizam. The sixth Nizam, Mahboob Ali Pasha, was a connoisseur of stones and acquired some splendid gems for the Asaf Jah treasury during his reign. He also selected some of the best stones in the Hyderabad treasury and had them set into rings, buttons and cufflinks – the only items of jewellery that he was inclined to wear.

This important ring has been included in the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Kanval Almas

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 3 cm  Diam (diamond): 1.7 cm
Weight: 19 gm
NJ 95.26

A simple gold ring (*angothi*) claw-set with a round diamond of light golden-yellow colour weighing approximately 25 carats. This piece is listed in the trust deed along with four other diamond rings. The best one was assigned to the Fourth Schedule as ceremonial regalia and no longer forms a part of this collection.[94] The ring belongs to the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

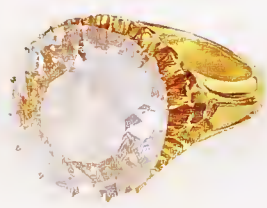
## Angothi Almas Kanval Be Shakl Badam

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2 cm  Diamond: 1.5 x 3 cm
Weight: 23 gm
NJ 95.88

A ring (*angothi*) centrally set with a marquise-shaped coloured diamond weighing approximately 25 carats. The gem is held in place by carved claws in a simple gold mount. The Nizam's inventory assigns a value of Rs 5,000 to the ring and it is included in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angothi Almas Kanval Gulabi

Gold set with a diamond
Deccan
19th century
Diam (including setting): 2.5 cm  Diam (diamond): 1.5 cm
Weight: 10 gm
NJ 95.30



A simple ring (*angothi*) set with a round light pink diamond, weighing approximately 7 carats, held in place with claws in a gold mount. The shoulders are decorated with an open-work design and the band is of plain gold. The ring forms part of the Fifth Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust.

## Angushtariyan Jaravi

Gold set with miscellaneous stones
Deccan
Late 19th century
Different sizes
Different weights
NJ 95.140/1-11

A collection of rings (*angushtariyan*), all in open-back gold settings with a variety of precious coloured gems and diamonds. The shoulders and bands are plain, or carved with a pierced design and set with diamonds. This group of rings includes a faceted ruby with small diamonds on the shoulders, a yellow sapphire in a carved gold mount, an emerald with diamonds on the sides, a cabochon ruby with a diamond surround and diamonds on the band, a table-cut diamond in a trellis-work mount, a square spinel set amidst diamonds, a single round diamond ring, a turquoise with diamonds on both sides, a diamond, ruby and sapphire ring, a marquise-shaped sapphire surrounded with diamonds and a cat's eye within a diamond frame and a simple gold band.

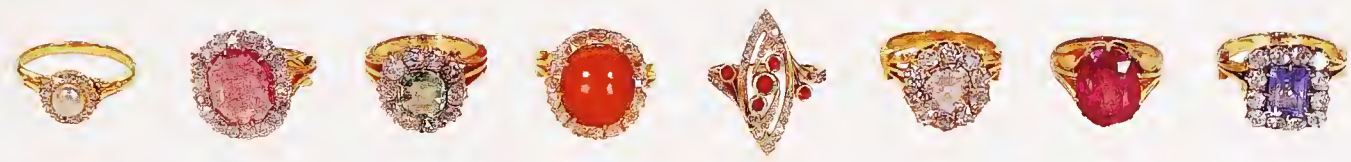
The turquoise ring is inscribed on the inside of the band with the letters 'ORR 18'. It was made by P Orr & Sons, Madras. A turquoise ring (facing page, below) that was allocated to Gowhar Begum also bears the mark of the same firm.[95] The rings are assigned to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Angushtariyan

Gold set with miscellaneous stones
Deccan
Early 20th century
Different sizes
Different weights
NJ 95.171/1-8

A collection of eight rings (*angushtariyan*) set with various stones with diamonds in gold mounts. These rings include a pearl within a frame of tiny diamonds, a spinel with diamonds, an emerald with diamond surround, a coral surrounded with foiled diamonds, a marquise-shaped ring set with rubies and diamonds, a rose-cut diamond set in a frame of smaller diamonds, a ruby simply set in gold and a rectangular sapphire with diamonds. Such rings were obviously made for everyday use, though the fine quality gems in some of them proclaim their royal provenance.

The rings are among the jewels assigned to Mehr-un-nissa Begum in the Sixth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.



## Angushtariyan Mukhtalif Nug

Gold set with miscellaneous stones
Deccan
Early 20th century
Different sizes
Different weights
NJ 95.163/1-11

Eleven gold rings (*angushtariyan*) set with a variety of precious stones in gold mounts, some surrounded with diamonds, and some with a carved trellis-work design on the shoulders.

The rings include five corals on a simple gold band, a table-cut diamond, an old-cut diamond with small diamonds on the shoulders, a cabochon ruby, a pink spinel surrounded with diamonds, a yellow sapphire, a marquise-shaped blue sapphire within a diamond frame, a ruby with diamonds, an emerald, a turquoise surrounded with diamonds and a diamond flower-head with a cat's eye in the centre.

The turquoise and diamond ring is inscribed 'ORR 18' inside the band and attributed to the workshop of P Orr & Sons, Madras. There are several rings in the collection[96] made by the same firm, including another turquoise ring (facing page) that was assigned to Ekbal Begum. These rings were allocated to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

# Toe-Rings

## Anwat Paon Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
Diam (flower-head): 3.2 cm
Weight: 60 gm
NJ 95.170/1-2

A pair of toe-rings (*anwat paon*) in the form of flower-heads with a diamond in the centre surrounded with eight foiled diamond petals. The gems all in traditional *kundan* settings. The hinged band and the back are enamelled with floral motifs in red, green and white with blue highlights. This pair is similar to the ones below and were assigned to Mehr-un-nissa Begum in the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Anwat Paon Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
Diam (flower-head): 3 cm
Weight: 50 gm
NJ 95.160/1-2

A pair of beautiful toe-rings (*anwat paon*) in the form of flower-heads, each *kundan*-set with 11 foiled old-cut diamonds in pear-shaped petal surrounds. The reverse and the hinged band enamelled with red and green floral motifs with touches of white. Toe-rings were part of traditional royal jewellery, and this pair was assigned to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Anwat Paon Jaravi

Gold set with diamonds; enamelled on the reverse
Deccan
18th century
Diam (flower-head): 3 cm
Weight: 62 gm
NJ 95.145/1-2

A pair of toe-rings (*anwat paon*) in the form of flower-heads *kundan*-set with foiled old-cut diamonds with a hinged band to facilitate wear. The reverse and the band decorated in red, green and white enamel with mauvish-blue highlights. The flower-head slightly curved to fit the big toe. Strictures against wearing gold on the feet rarely applied to royalty in India. This pair is similar to two other toe jewels (above). These jewels were allotted to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

# Nose-Rings

## Nath Marvareed Mai Larli Marvareed

Gold with pearls and a ruby bead
Deccan
Early 19th century
Diam: 9 cm
Weight: 23 gm
NJ 95.132

A simple nose-ring (*nath*) in the form of a big gold hoop with a ruby bead strung between two pearls, and two strands of pearls to hook into the hair and support the weight of the jewel. The nose-ring is identical to another one (below) in the collection. This piece was allocated to Ekbal Begum in the Fourth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

## Nath Marvareed Mai Larli Marvareed

Gold with pearls and a ruby bead
Deccan
Early 19th century
Diam: 9 cm
Weight: 23 gm
NJ 95.161

A strikingly simple nose-ring (*nath*) in the form of a big gold hoop with two pearls on either side of a ruby bead, and two strands of pearls to hook into the hair and thereby support the weight of the nose ornament. This jewel, similar to another one (above), was assigned to Gowhar Begum in the Fifth Schedule of the Supplemental Jewellery Trust.

# NOTES

## INTRODUCTION

1 Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 62
2 These pictures, taken by Prashant Panjiar, were published in conjunction with an article titled "Nizam's Jewels Worth a King's Ransom", *India Today*, February 15, 1995, pp. 68-75

## THE ASAF JAHS

1 Duff, James Grant, *History of the Mahrattas*, p. 226
2 Rao, P Setu Madhava, *Eighteenth Century Deccan*, p. 106
3 A draft sketch of the flag accompanying the proposal and the Nizam's orders thereupon is available in the AP State Archives, Hyderabad.
4 Rao, P Setu Madhava, *Eighteenth Century Deccan*, p. 64
5 Kaye, John William, *Life and Correspondence of John Malcolm*, p. 100
6 Briggs, Henry George, *The Nizam – His History and Relations with the British Government*, p. 4
7 Gribble, J D B, *A History of the Deccan, Vol. II*, p. 236
8 Nawab Jiwan Yar Jung Bahadur, *My Life – Being the Autobiography of Nawab Server-ul-Mulk Bahadur* (trans from the Urdu), p. 141
9 Mudiraj, K Krishnaswamy, *Pictorial Hyderabad, Vols. I & II*, pp. 17-18
10 Lynton, Harriet Ronken & Mohini Rajan, *The Days of the Beloved*, p. 16
11 Bawa, V K, *The Last Nizam*, p. 43
12 Benichou, Lucien D, *From Autocracy to Integration – Political Developments in Hyderabad State (1938-1948)*, p. 39
13 Ahmad, Zaheer, *Life's Yesterdays: Glimpses of Sir Nizamat Jung and His Times*, p. 1

## THE SALE

1 Allowances for the maintenance of themselves and their successors, dispensed as compensation for surrendering their ruling powers and for the dissolution of their states, the amount being determined on the basis of the average annual revenue of their territory.
2 Menon, V P, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, p. 480
3 The agreement addressed four important issues: "Article I – (1) His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad shall, with effect from the first day of April 1950, be entitled to receive annually for his privy purse the sum of Rs 50,00,000 (Rupees Fifty lakhs), free of all taxes. Provided that the sum specified above shall be payable only to the present Nizam of Hyderabad for his lifetime, and not to his successors, for whom provision will be made subsequently by the Government of India. (2) The said amount is intended to cover all the expenses of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad and his family including expenses on account of his personal staff, maintenance of his residence, marriages and other ceremonies etc. and will neither be increased nor reduced for any reason whatsoever. (3) The said amount shall be payable to the Nizam of Hyderabad in four equal instalments at the beginning of each quarter in advance. (4) The payment of the said amount as herein provided is guaranteed by the Government of India. Article II – 1) His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad shall be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all the jewels, jewellery, ornaments, shares, securities and other private properties, moveable as well as immoveable (as distinct from State properties) belonging to him on the date of this Agreement. 2) His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad has furnished to the Government of India lists of all the moveable and immoveable properties held by him as such private properties. 3) If any dispute arises as to whether any item of property is the private property of His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad or State Property, it will be referred to such independent person as the Government of India may nominate and the decision of that person shall be final and binding on all concerned. Article III – His Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the members of his family shall be entitled to all the personal privileges, dignities and titles enjoyed by them whether within or outside the territories of the State immediately before the fifteenth day of August, 1947. Article IV – The Government of India guarantees the succession according to law and custom to the *gaddi* of the State and to the personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles of His Exalted Highness, the Nizam of Hyderabad." (Text of the Agreement signed between His Exalted Highness Nawab Sir Mir Osman Ali Khan Bahadur, the Nizam of Hyderabad and Mr Vapal Pangunni Menon, Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of States, dated January 25, 1950.)
4 There were trusts for his sons, grandsons and granddaughters. Some of the other trusts were the Housing Accommodation Trust, Stepsisters' Trust, Sacred Relics Trust, Pilgrimage Money Trust, Family Pocket Money Trust, Grandsons' Pocket Money Trust, *Sarf-e-khas* Charity Trust and so on.
5 The First Schedule of the 'H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust' contained 107 items. Of these, 22 items were listed in the Fourth Schedule and handed over to Mukarram Jah after 1971 and specified items were transferred to other trusts. The balance items were acquired by the Government of India.
6 The Supplemental Jewellery Trust comprised 144 items of jewellery. Of these, 84 items were acquired by the Government of India while the remaining have obviously been sold.
7 The figure of 173 items is based on the Government of India inventory prepared when the jewels were valued and eventually acquired. However, the actual number of pieces (accounting for pairs of armbands, sets of buttons, groups of turban ornaments and so on is in excess of this figure). The total number of individual pieces is 325, not including the Jacob diamond and the 22 unset emeralds. The number of catalogue entries in the present book is 186, since some turban ornaments and rings – that were originally grouped together – have been catalogued individually. But pairs of armbands, some groups of rings, buttons and cufflinks are treated as one entry.
8 Under the Mughals there was no differentiation between state and personal jewellery. Jewels belonged to the empire and the ruler was the personification of the empire. However, select jewels and gems of outstanding quality, inestimable value and sentimental worth were regarded as 'dynastic jewels' and always passed down from generation to generation. The *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* records that on November 30, 1617, Jahangir presented a dynastic jewel to his son Shah Jahan: "...a flawless ruby weighing nine *tanks* and five *surkhs* (184 carats) worth one hundred twenty-five thousand rupees, and two pearls. This was the ruby Her Majesty Maryam-Makani, His Majesty Arsh-Ashyani's (Akbar's) mother, gave me as a present at my birth. For years it was in his turban ornament, and thereafter I too kept it in my turban ornament for good luck. Aside from its monetary value and intrinsic worth, since it has been like a good luck charm for this eternal dynasty, it was given to my son." (Thackston, Wheeler M., *The Jahangirnama*, folio 162a, p. 236). More important though, custody of the 'dynastic jewels' legitimized claims to the throne. They were worn at the coronation and important state events (The Fourth Schedule of the H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust specifies that the jewels listed therein were to be used for the coronation, and special ceremonial occasions). Aurangzeb's request to Shah Jahan to borrow the dynastic jewels for his coronation, as he did not envision his imprisoned father having much use for them, so enraged the dethroned emperor that, according to Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, "for some days he was like a madman, and he even nearly died. In the excess of his passion he frequently called for a pestle and mortar, saying that he would pound up all his precious stones and pearls, so that Aurangzeb might never possess them." (Ball, V (Tr.) and Crooke, William, (Ed.), *Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's Travels in India, Vol. I*, p. 295). After his death, Aurangzeb rushed to Agra and seized a large golden basin full of all the jewels of his father. (Bernier, Francois, *Travels in the Mogul Empire, 1656-1668*, pp. 198-199). In like manner, Nizam-ul-Mulk's son Nasir Jung "seized his father's treasures" (Malleson, Col. G B, *An Historical Sketch of the Native States of India*, p. 279) and proclaimed himself viceroy of the Deccan.
9 The Government of India inventory of the jewels constitutes 89 items from H.E.H. The Nizam's Jewellery Trust and the remaining 84 from H.E.H. The Nizam's Supplemental Jewellery Trust.
10 The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act stipulates that all cultural artefacts over 100 years old cannot be exported out of India. The act further states that items declared as 'art treasures' also cannot be exported, irrespective of their age. It provides for forcible acquisition of cultural property in the

national interest, regulates the business of art dealers and stipulates that all objects over 100 years old held by private individuals have to he registered with a Registrar of Antiquities.

11 This committee included C Sivaramamurthi, Karl Khandalavala, N R Banerjee, U P Shah and M N Deshpande, assisted by valuers Natwar Tribhuvan Das Jhaveri and Suraj Mal Lallu Bhai & Co of Bombay and Ganjam Nagappa & Sons, Bangalore.

12 The amendment stated that any human work of art, of artistic and aesthetic value, could be declared as an art treasure even if it was less than 100 years old and its maker was not alive.

13 Items from both these trusts had already been handed over to beneficiaries or sold. Negotiations were initiated in respect of the remaining items.

14 This point was referred to the Law Ministry and the Attorney General. The Attorney General expressed the opinion that the only way to forcibly acquire items of the regalia category deemed state property without payment of any compensation would be to issue an ordinance for acquiring all items of regalia in the possession of the former rulers including the Nizam of Hyderahad. The details of the ordinance had to he worked out hy the Ministry of Home Affairs since it was a matter arising out of an agreement with the erstwhile princely states and the Home Ministry was the successor to the 'Ministry of States'. After a great deal of detailed consideration of the matter, the Home Ministry rejected the feasibility of such a legislation. It would require re-scrutiny of all moveahle property items of over 500 former princely states; what constitutes regalia would have to be specifically determined. This would require monumental research and evidence. Few moveable property lists existed and records were no longer even traceable; most former rulers had already disposed of regalia items. Finally, it was felt that there would be absolutely no moral or legal justification in re-opening the merger agreements. At the time of the formation of the Union of India, merger of the states was of paramount importance. The primary concern of the government then was to ensure accession in an atmosphere of goodwill and co-operation. It was for this reason that lists of state regalia and jewels were not drawn up and whatever items were indicated by the states as private property were readily accepted after negotiations. This point has been extensively discussed by V P Menon in *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States.*

## THE JEWELS

1 Habib, Muhammad, (tr.) *The Campaigns of Ala'u'd-Din Khilji being the Khaza'inul Futuh – Treasures of Victory – of Hazrat Amir Khusrau of Delhi*, pp. 106-107

2 *Chronology of Modern Hyderabad, The, (1720-1900)*, p. 42

3 Ibid, p. 66

4 Husain, Yusuf, *The First Nizam: The Life and Times of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 245

5 *Chronology of Modern Hyderabad, The, (1720-1900)*, p. 174

6 Ibid, p. 284

7 Ibid, p. 118

8 Luther, Narendra, *Hyderabad, Memoirs of a City*, p. 285

9 Briggs, Henry George, *The Nizam: His History and Relations with the British Government, Vol. II*, p. 192

10 *Chronology of Modern Hyderabad, The, (1720-1900)*, p. 96

11 Ibid, p. 214

12 Ibid, p. 85

13 Ibid, p. 108

14 Ibid, p. 292

15 Ibid, pp. 75-76

16 Ibid, p. 125

17 Ibid, p. 324

18 Briggs, Henry George, *The Nizam: His History and Relations with the British Government, Vol. I*, p. 115

19 Husain, Yusuf, *The First Nizam: The Life and Times of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 245

20 Luther, Narendra, *Hyderabad, Memoirs of a City*, p. 161

21 Willmott, C and Syed Hossain Bilgrami, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions, Vol. II*, p. 112

22 Briggs, Henry George, *The Nizam: His History and Relations with the British Government, Vol. I*, p. 117

23 Mudiraj, K Krishnaswamy, *Pictorial Hyderabad, Vols. I & II*, p. 21

24 Lynton, Harriet Ronken & Mohini Rajan, *The Days of the Beloved*, p. 63

25 Luther, Narendra, *Hyderabad, Memoirs of a City*, p. 207

26 For the text of the *firman* see Hashmi, Mohd. Naseeruddin, *Al-Mahboob*, pp. 40-43

27 Unknown writer, "The Nizam", the *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 1891, p. 6

28 Bawa, V K, *The Last Nizam*, p. 66

29 For more than 100 years after the Asaf Jahs established themselves in the Deccan, their treasury was housed in the Golconda Fort, even though the Nizams lived in the city of Hyderabad. They periodically visited the fort with their entourage and spent extended periods of time attending to important state and financial matters. However, as the financial crisis in the state deepened in 1831, Nasir-ud-Daula removed the treasury from the Golconda Fort to Daulat-Khana palace. It was perhaps at this time, that the state treasury was bifurcated from the personal treasury of the Nizams, in all probability to insulate the dynastic wealth from the drain on the state wealth. Thereafter, the Nizams were not averse to depleting the state exchequer, while their own store of gems was left practically untouched. During Mahboob Ali Pasha's reign, the treasury was housed in Masrath Mahal in the Purani Haveli complex and when Osman Ali Khan opted to live in King Kothi, it was duly shifted there.

30 Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 64

31 Ibid, p. 132

32 Believed to have yielded a sum of Rs 60,000,000 (£4,400,000) according to Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 134

33 Unknown writer, "The Nizam", the *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 1891, p. 6

34 Brinda, Maharani of Kapurthala (as told to Elaine Williams), *Maharani: The Story of an Indian Princess*, p. 134

35 Ibid, pp. 136-137

36 Allen, Charles & Sharada Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, p. 153. Correspondence with Windsor Castle revealed that no record of this gift exists.

37 Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 52

38 Morrow, Ann, *The Maharajas of India*, p. 176

39 As mentioned hy Nawab Mujeeb Yar Jung (Osman Ali Khan's son-in-law) in conversation with the author in Hyderabad.

40 Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 64

41 Of the five emerald rings listed in the trust, one was designated as state regalia. This ring is no longer in the collection. The other four rings are NJ 95.23, NJ 95.85, NJ 95.86, NJ 95.87

42 NJ 95.36/1-2

43 Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 64

44 Morrow, Ann, *The Maharajas of India*, p. 180

45 *Chronology of Modern Hyderabad, The, (1720-1900)*, p. 229

46 Sarkar, Jadunath (tr), *Maasir-i Alamgiri* hy Saqi M Khan, p. 184

47 Guy, John and Deborah Swallow, (ed.), *Arts of India: 1550-1900*, p. 123

48 The syncretic character of the culture of the Deccan gave birth to art forms and motifs which in the pre-Mughal period show close affiliations with the Safavid dynasty in Iran. Distinct flower forms and design motifs appear in a wide range of decorative arts ranging from textiles, manuscript pages, architectural surfaces, carpets and metalware whose origins are clearly European. From the 17th century onwards, the Mughal aesthetic is pronounced. Enlightened patronage in the Mughal court drew craftsmen from various parts of the Deccan to the imperial ateliers. Due to paucity of material, little attention has been accorded to the development of jewellery manufacture in the Deccan. However, in a region that was the hub of the international gem trade where artists had the skills to produce some of the most fabulous painted cottons (chintzes) and inlaid metalwork (*bidri*) – it seems inconceivable that the technique of enamelling was not mastered.

49 See catalogue entry for these items.

50 Manuel Keene, in the recently published catalogue *Treasury of the World, Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughals, The Al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait National Museum*, has suggested that in all probability enamelling was practised and perfected in the Deccan before spreading to other parts of

the country including the Mughal court. Moreover, Deccani craftsmen probably learnt the technique from European jewellers. In this context, it is pertinent to note that Goa was a major port and became the principal centre for diamond trading in India after its capture by the Portuguese in 1510. Goa was strategically located within proximity to the diamond mines at Bijapur and Golconda. Rua Direita, the jewellers street in Goa, became a major centre of exchange – supplying the world with diamonds and other precious stones, and in turn receiving and supplying local rulers with the much-coveted Colombian emeralds. Alfonse de Albuquerque (1515) left many craftsmen in Goa, among whom were individuals employed in the setting of jewels and precious stones. In the 16th century when Portugal controlled the gem trade in India, Goa was home to goldsmiths and jewellers from different parts of the country and the world. They gathered to work with the best stones that came out of the Indian mines. Indian goldsmiths travelled to Lisbon and "Raulu Xatim, the son of a Goan goldsmith, actually stayed on in Lisbon between 1518 and 1520," perhaps to undergo training and gain knowledge of the kind of items sought after in Portugal. Business flourished, fuelled by high demand within the country and overseas. Together with foreign dealers, goldsmiths from Portugal also settled in the city, executing commissions for governors and viceroys. Between 1622 and 1628, Domingo Nunes, a Portuguese jeweller living in Goa, "carried out several commissions for Dom Francisco da Gama, the viceroy." (Silva, Nuno Vassallo e, "Jewels and Gems in Goa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century", *Marg*, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, p. 58). Jacques de Coutre, a Flemish jewel merchant, sailed to India from Lisbon, married a Portuguese girl and settled in Goa in 1603. For the next 20 years, he conducted a flourishing business as a gemstone dealer, sourcing the best diamonds and precious stones from the Golconda mines and other gem bazaars in south India and selling them to merchants visiting Goa.

51 As quoted in Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 65

52 The firm of Musaddilal Sons was founded by a family of jewellers who migrated from Haryana in the late 19th century, to take advantage of the business potential in Hyderabad. The Nizam and the many nobles of Hyderabad were their clients for many decades. The firm exists even today and is one of the few that is still in the jewellery business.

53 The Company was established in Calcutta in 1808.

54 Founded in Calcutta in 1859.

55 The firm of T R Tawker no longer exists. Descendants have long since ceased to be jewellers and are now pursuing different lines of business. Babu Pannalal, whose philanthropy contributed to the construction of the Jain temple on Malabar Hill, Bombay, also left no records. His family is no longer in the jewellery business and they could provide no information on their illustrious ancestor.

56 Gautier, Gilbert, *Cartier, The Legend*, p. 137

57 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Cartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, p. 159

58 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Cartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, p. 77. Correspondence by this author with the firm confirmed this single purchase.

59 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Cartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, p. 178

60 Ibid, p. 289

61 Mascetti, Daniella & Amanda Triossi, *Bulgari*, p. 95

62 In the Supplemental Jewellery Trust, Osman Ali Khan allocated jewels to his wives Gowhar Begum and Ekbal Begum and to his daughters Shahzadi Pasha Begum and Mehr-un-nissa Begum.

63 Ball, V (Tr.) and William Crooke, (Ed.), *Jean-Baptiste Tavernier's Travels in India*, Appendix II, p. 352. Ball provides a list of all the diamond mines in India of which there are authentic records in this Appendix.

64 A detailed list of visitors to the mines in the 18th and 19th centuries is provided in his bibliography by Khalidi, Omar, *Romance of the Golconda Diamonds*, p. 123

65 Information pertaining to the 'Nizam' diamond can be found in Burton, Captain Richard F., "The Nizam Diamond", *The Quarterly Journal of Science*, London, No. LI, July 1876, pp. 351-360 and Ian Balfour, *Famous Diamonds*, p. 194. Balfour appears to have confused the Nizam with the Jacob diamond.

66 Willmott, C and Syed Hossain Bilgrami, *Historical and Descriptive Sketch of His Highness the Nizam's Dominions, Vol. I*, p. 235.

67 Unknown writer, "The Nizam", the *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 1891, p. 6

## THE CATALOGUE

*All measurements of jewels are in centimetres. Vertical (height and width) precedes horizontal (length). Necklaces are measured as worn – length refers to the vertical length of the jewel over the chest. In rings, the diameter of the jewel includes the setting. In some cases, the dimension of the gemstone is indicated.*

1 Streeter, Edwin W, *The Great Diamonds of the World*, p. 56

2 The reconstruction of the origin and history of the Imperial 'Jacob' diamond is based on reports of the proceedings of the case that appeared in newspapers dating to 1891 and 1892 and Calcutta court records for the same period. This author has referred to the *Times of India*, the *Madras Mail* and the *Bombay Gazette* newspapers.

3 Balfour, Ian, *Famous Diamonds*, p. 274

4 Kunz, George F, *Science*, August 5, 1887

5 Balfour, Ian, *Famous Diamonds*, p. 275

6 *Madras Mail*, January 14, 1892, p. 6

7 Kunz, George F, *Science*, August 5, 1887

8 As told by Jacob to the correspondent of the *Madras Mail*, October 12, 1891, p. 6

9 The Nizam's testimony in the *Madras Mail*, October 10, 1891, p. 5

10 *Madras Mail*, October 10, 1891, p. 5

11 Ibid

12 *Times of India*, December 14, 1891, p. 15

13 Ibid

14 *Madras Mail*, October 5, 1891, p. 3

15 Abid purchased or was gifted a vast area of land in Hyderabad where he established an impressive retail establishment called 'Abid's' that traded in goods from England. The area where the store once stood is known as Abid's even today.

16 *Madras Mail*, December 18, 1891, p. 5

17 Ibid, p. 6

18 Wills, Probates, Administrations and Inventories of estates of persons who died in India and Burma (Bombay 1920-21), Oriental and India Office Collections, London.

19 *Bombay Gazette* Summary, September 18, 1891, p. 10

20 *Madras Mail*, October 9, 1891, p. 4

21 In Francis Marion Crawford's novel, *Mr Issacs*, the hero is a Persian jewel merchant modelled on Jacob whom Crawford had met in Simla; the enigmatic Lurgan Sahib in Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*; and the principal character in Col. Newman Davis' *Jadoo*.

22 Streeter, Edwin W, *The Great Diamonds of the World*, p. x

23 *Gemstone Forecaster*, January 27, 2000

24 "Nizam's Jewels Worth a King's Ransom", *India Today*, February 15, 1995, pp. 68-75

25 The government jeweller who has been closely associated with the acquisition of this collection.

26 Russian emeralds were first found in 1830. But the crystals were large and the stones were typically small and of low quality.

27 The firm was established by a family of Gujarati jewellers who settled in Madras in the early 18th century and officially commenced their jewellery business in 1761. Right up to the turn of the 20th century, they were the leading jewellers of Madras, with a large clientele of wealthy customers and maharajas all over India. A majestic Indo-Saracenic building on Mount Road in Madras was built as their showroom, from where they dealt in precious gems and employed skilled craftsmen to execute orders for a clientele that was scattered all over the country. The firm no longer exists and the family's descendants could not shed any light on past dealings of the company.

28 Allen, Charles & Sharada Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, p. 150

29 Ibid, p. 203

30 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Cartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, p. 181

31 Unknown writer, "The Nizam", the *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 2, 1891, p. 6

32 Birdwood, C G M, *The Arts of India*, p. 193

33 Since the gems are set into the ornaments, all weights are purely approximate, based on estimations provided by the Government of India.

34 The inventory records this item as *turre-i-almas parab*.

35 Usually the reverse of pieces meant to be worn together were matched. In these examples, the white and black enamel provides a stunning contrast, while the front of the jewels has been perfectly matched.
36 See Markevitch, Elizabeth, *Indian Jewellery*, pp. 32-33, no. 9
37 The inventory records this item as *turre-i-almas parab.*
38 Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 61
39 Ibid, p. 62
40 Ihid
41 Ibid
42 Husain, Yusuf, in *The First Nizam: The Life and Times of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 120
43 This item is one of seven pieces (NJ 95.72/1-NJ 95.72/7), some incomplete, that are listed together as one item in the inventory.
44 Christie's, *Magnificent Mughal Jewels*, October 6, 1999, Cat. No. 251. Item nos. NJ 95.72/2, NJ 95.72/3, NJ 95.72/4, NJ 95.72/5 and NJ 95.72/7 are all of identical workmanship and design and belong to the same group.
45 This item is one of seven pieces (NJ 95.72/1-NJ 95.72/7), some incomplete, that are listed as one item in the inventory, namely a *sarpech.* However, this item is a *kalgi* and hence has heen catalogued here under its correct name.
46 Bennett, David & Daniela Mascetti, *Understanding Jewellery*, pp. 218-220
47 A pendant in the form of a bird and a pair of ear plugs in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum, New York, display a similar colour palette and have been attributed to the Deccan. I am very grateful to Amy Poster of the Brooklyn Museum for bringing these items to my attention.
48 For a similar collection of faceted diamond *taveez* beads, see Christie's, *Magnificent Mughal Jewels*, October 1999, nos. 193, 194 and 195
49 Markevitch, Elizabeth, *Indian Jewellery*, p. 119
50 See Christie's, *Magnificent Mughal Jewels*, October 1999, No. 182, for identical pendants. The quality of the enamel in all these pieces is practically identical.
51 See Christie's, *Magnificent Mughal Jewels*, October 1999, No. 182
52 Several other very fine jewels in the collection incorporate silver.
53 See Worswick, Clark, *Princely India*, pp. 39 & 47
54 See Turban Ornaments (NJ 95.72/1 - NJ 95.72/7) and Armbands (NJ 95.34/1-4).
55 Joyce, Kristin & Shellei Addison, *Pearls: Ornament & Obsession*, p. 36
56 The emerald necklace (NJ 95.90) and a sapphire necklace (NJ 95.107). There are several other similar necklaces of earlier date such as NJ 95.122, NJ 95.146 and NJ 95.92.
57 For a remarkably similar piece, see Markevitch, Elizabeth, *Indian Jewellery*, pp. 36-37
58 Ibid
59 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Gartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, p. 127
60 Allen, Charles & Sharada Dwivedi, *Lives of the Indian Princes*, p. 202
61 A photograph of Pratapsingh Gaekwad wearing this pearl necklace is published in Prior, Katherine & Adamson, John, *Maharajas' Jewels*, p. 103
62 Joyce, Kristin & Shellei Addison, *Pearls: Ornament & Obsession*, p. 120
63 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Gartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, p. 135
64 A miniature painting of Sultan Ihrahim Adil Shah II of Bijapur dating to the late 16th century shows the ruler wearing a strikingly similar necklace in Welch, Stuart Cary, *India: Art and Culture* 1300-1900, p. 390. See also Usha R Bala Krishnan & Meera Sushil Kumar, *Dance of the Peacock: Jewellery Traditions of India*, p. 118 for another similar chain.
65 In several portraits in the Victoria & Albert Museum, illustrated in Christie's catalogues of *Important Indian Jewellery*, October 8, 1997 and *Magnificent Mughal Jewels*, October 6, 1999, belts such as the current example are portrayed.
66 A beautiful pair of armbands (*bazubands*) set with diamonds and peridots, once believed to have been in the collection of the Nizams of Hyderabad is featured in Usha R Bala Krishnan & Meera Sushil Kumar, *Dance of the Peacock: Jewellery Traditions of India*, No. 7, p. 16
67 See Christie's, *Magnificent Mughal Jewels*, October 6, 1999, No. 248, for a pendant similarly set and attributed to the Deccan.
68 Stronge, Susan, Nima Smith & J C Harle, *A Golden Treasury, Jewellery from the Indian Subcontinent*, No. 37, p. 51
69 Welch, Stuart Cary, *India, Art and Culture: 1300-1900*, p. 163
70 Quoted from Prof. H H Wilson Mill's *History of British India* by Briggs, Henry George, *The Nizam: His History and Relations with the British Government, Vol. I*, p. ix
71 Listed as the first item in the First Schedule of the Nizam's Jewellery Trust with the stipulation that it was to be moved to the Sacred Relics Trust after Mir Osman Ali Khan's death, where it is still believed to be held.
72 Karaka, D F, *Fabulous Mogul: Nizam VII of Hyderabad*, p. 65
73 Powis Castle, Edinburgh, the collection of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II of England; and private collections.
74 Stronge, Susan, Nima Smith & J C Harle, *A Golden Treasury, Jewellery from the Indian Subcontinent*, No. 37, p. 51
75 Christie's, *Magnificent Mughal Jewels*, October 6, 1999, No. 251, p. 148
76 An almost identical piece has been catalogued as a neck collar (*gululband*) in Christie's, *Important Indian Jewellery*, October 8, 1997, No. 406. The only obvious difference is that in the Christie's example, no silver has been used.
77 Published in Untracht, Oppi, *Traditional Indian Jewellery*, Plate 736, p. 322
78 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Cartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, p. 159
79 P Orr & Sons, Marcks & Co, Cooke & Kelvey, Hamilton & Co etc.
80 Joyce, Kristin & Shellei Addison, *Pearls: Ornament & Obsession*, p. 81
81 Correspondent for the *Times of India*, writing from Tuticorin in the paper dated February 1, 1890.
82 Joyce, Kristin & Shellei Addison, *Pearls: Ornament & Obsession*, p. 35
83 Ibid, p. 33
84 Nadelhoffer, Hans, *Gartier, Jewelers Extraordinary*, Notes, Pearls No. 29
85 As quoted from the *Ruq'at-i-Alamgiri*, by Husain, Yusuf, in *The First Nizam: The Life and Times of Nizamu'l-Mulk Asaf Jah I*, p. 36
86 Watt, Sir George, *Indian Art at Delhi, 1903*. Being the Offical Catalogue of the Delhi Exhibition, 1902-1903, p. 490
87 Frederick Emery to Mrs Emery, Novemher 10, 1888, Oriental and India Office Collections, *Emery Gollection*, Mss. Eur. D1029, ff. 182-5. Also Emery to his wife Jessie, June 6, 1885, ibid. f. 130.
88 There are five other rings bearing the inscription of P Orr & Sons in the collection. These are NJ 95.25, NJ 95.24, NJ 95.104.23/4, NJ 95.163/1-11 (the turquoise ring) and NJ 95.140/1-11 (the turquoise ring).
89 NJ 95.85, NJ 95.87 and NJ 95.23.
90 This information was obtained from the *Gemstone Forecaster Newsletter* of January 28, 2000 published on the website preciousgemstones.com.
91 Other rings made by P Orr & Sons in the collection include NJ 95.65, NJ 95.25, NJ 95.104/4, NJ 95.163/1-11 (the turquoise ring) and NJ 95.140/1-11 (the turquoise ring).
92 Rings made by P Orr & Sons in the collection are NJ 95.65, NJ 95.163/1-11 (the turquoise ring) and NJ 95.140/1-11 (the turquoise ring).
93 NJ 95.65, NJ 95.24, NJ 95.104/4, NJ 95.163/1-11 (the turquoise ring) and NJ 95.140/1-11 (the turquoise ring).
94 The other rings that are listed with this one are NJ 95.24, NJ 95.25, NJ 95.26.
95 Other rings made by P Orr & Sons, in the collection include NJ 95.65, NJ 95.25, NJ 95.24 and NJ 95.104/4.
96 NJ 95.65, NJ 95.25, NJ 95.24 and NJ 95.104/4.

# GLOSSARY

*a jour* – claw setting
*almas* – diamond
*almas phool* – diamond flowers
*angothi* – ring
*angushtari* – ring
*angushtariyan* – rings
*antiyan* – earrings
*anwat* – ring for the big toe
*anwat paon* – toe-ring
*awaiza-i-zamarrud* – suspended with emeralds
*bachkani* – child
*badam* – almond
*baglus* – buckle, belt with buckle
*bala* – little
*bali* – circular earrings
*bania* – community of financiers
*barai sari* – encrusted or to be worn on a sari
*bazuband* – armband
*be shakl* – resembling
*bhujband* – armband
*bidri* – inlaid metalwork
*chakriyan* – round ear studs
*challa* – ring
*champakali* – resembling *Michelia champaca* flower
*champleve* – technique of enamelling
*chantara* – moon and star
*char* – four
*chintak* – collar-hugging necklace
*choti* – ribbon
*chow* – weight for pearls
*chowkaray* – earrings with four pearls
*cire perdne* – lost wax method of casting
*dand* – armband
*dastar* – Hyderabadi headgear
*dastband* – bracelets
*dholna* – suspended
*diwan* – prime minister
*durbar* – public audience
*en tremblant* – setting in a spring
*firman* – edict
*gaddi, masnad* – royal seat
*gehra* – dark
*ghariyal* – watch
*goshwara* – suspended or drops
*goshwara-i-marvareed* – suspended with pearls
*goshwara-i-zamarrud* – suspended with emerald drops
*gulabi* – pink
*guluband* – neck-hugging necklace
*gundiyan* – buttons
*hansli* – rigid necklace
*hansuli* – collar bone
*har* – necklace
**Id** – Muslim festival
*jagirdars* – land owners
*jagirs* – award of lands or land-holdings
*jaravi* – studded with gems
*jigha* – turban jewel
*joshan* – armband
*jugni* – pendant
*kalan* – big
*kalgi* – turban jewel
*kamar* – waist
*kamar patta* – belt
*kangui* – bangles
*kantah* – necklace
*kanthi* – necklace
*kanval* – faceted flat diamonds
*karan* – ear
*karan phool* – ear flowers
*karay* – bangles
*katar* – dagger
*khanazads* – adopted children
*khilat* – robes of honour
*khurd* – small
*krs* – that which becomes emaciated
*krsana* – term for pearls, derived from the word *krs*
*kulcha* – loaf of round dry baked bread
*kundan* – narrow ribbons of pure malleable gold
*lac* – resin
*larh, larha, larhi* – rows
*larli* – ruby
*lehsania* – garlic-shaped
*lu lu* – ear pendants
*mai* – with
*mai aweeza* – suspended with
*mala* – necklace
*mans* – weight for precious gems
*marvareed* – pearls
*mina* – enamel colours
*minakari* – enamelling
*moti, mothi* – pearls
*mukhlasi* – faceted flat diamonds
*mukhtalif* – variety
*munni* – beads
*murassa* – studded with gems
*kalan* – big
*na passand* – not to one's liking
*nageena* – gemstones
*nagi* – precious stone
*nath* – nose-ring
*navaratna* – nine auspicious planetary gems
*nazar, nazrana* – gifts of gold or jewels offered to the ruler as expressions of submission and loyalty
*neelum* – blue sapphire
*neem, numa* – half
*nug* – precious stones
*pachchikam* – technique of jewellery manufacture whereby uncut diamonds are foiled and encased in silver
*pachu* – a type of setting in which the gems are claw-set but foiled in closed-back gold mounts
*padak* – pendant
*pahunchiyan* – bracelets
*paizeb* – anklets
*panch* – five
*pankhiyan* – fan-shaped ear jewels
*parab* – straight flat, table-cut diamonds
*partajikam* – monochrome green enamel work
*partalanuma* – sword hilt
*passand* – to one's liking
*patri* – band
*patta tilai* – belt
*paon* – feet
*phalas* – pearl strings
*phool* – flowers
*pukhraj* – yellow sapphire
*purdah* – seclusion from public view
*rati* – weight for pearls
*saath* – seven
*saath larh* – seven rows
*saath tukdi* – seven pieces
*safed chalwan* – white enamel
*saheli moti* – matched pearls
*samosa* – triangular shape
*sankla* – bracelets
*sarf-e-khas* – lands inherited in lineal descent
*sarpatti* – turban jewel
*sarpech* – turban jewel
*shamsheer* – sword
*sher* – tiger
*sherwani* – long coat
*smaragdus, esmaurde, esmralde, esmeralde* – terms for emerald
*subedar* – governor
*sumran* – rosary, bracelet
*swami* **jewellery** – jewellery bearing the image of Hindu gods and goddesses worked in repoussé on sheet gold
*ta'zim* – honour
*taveez* – amulet
*teen* – three
*teen larh* – three rows
*tehnal* – part of the scabbard
*tola* – weight for pearls or gold
*tora* – chain
*tora ghariyal* – watch chain
*tora paon* – anklet
*tukdi* – panels
*turra* – turban jewel/plume
*yakhoot* – spinel
*zabarjad* – peridot
*zamarrud* – emerald
*zanjeer* – two-sided chain necklace
*zenana* – women's quarters/harem

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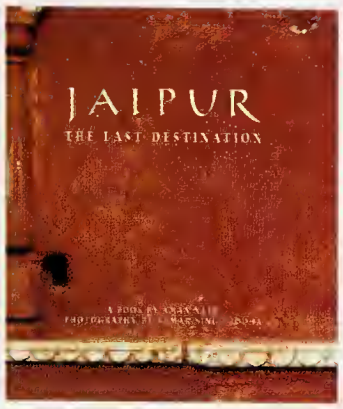


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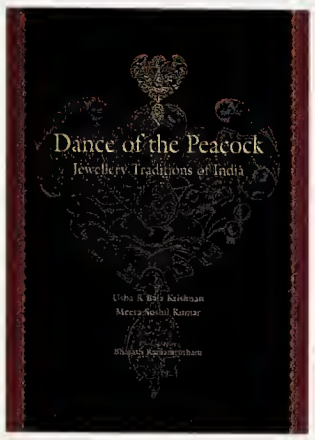


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